

The Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Empire



Essential Question

What factors helped unify early civilizations in Southwest Asia?



About the Photo: These remains of an ancient palace and temple are in Persepolis in what is now Iran.

In this module you will learn about the early civilizations in Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent, and about the Persian Empire.

What You Will Learn...

Lesson 1: Geography of the Fertile Crescent 66

The Big Idea The valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were the site of the world's first civilizations.

Lesson 2: The Sumerians 72

The Big Idea The Sumerians developed the first civilization in Mesopotamia.

Lesson 3: Military Empires 82

The Big Idea After the Sumerians, many cultures ruled parts of the Fertile Crescent.

Lesson 4: The Phoenicians 87

The Big Idea The Phoenicians created a wealthy trading society along the Mediterranean Sea.

Lesson 5: The Persian Empire 91

The Big Idea Over time the Persians came to rule a great empire, which eventually brought them into conflict with the Greeks.

Explore ONLINE!

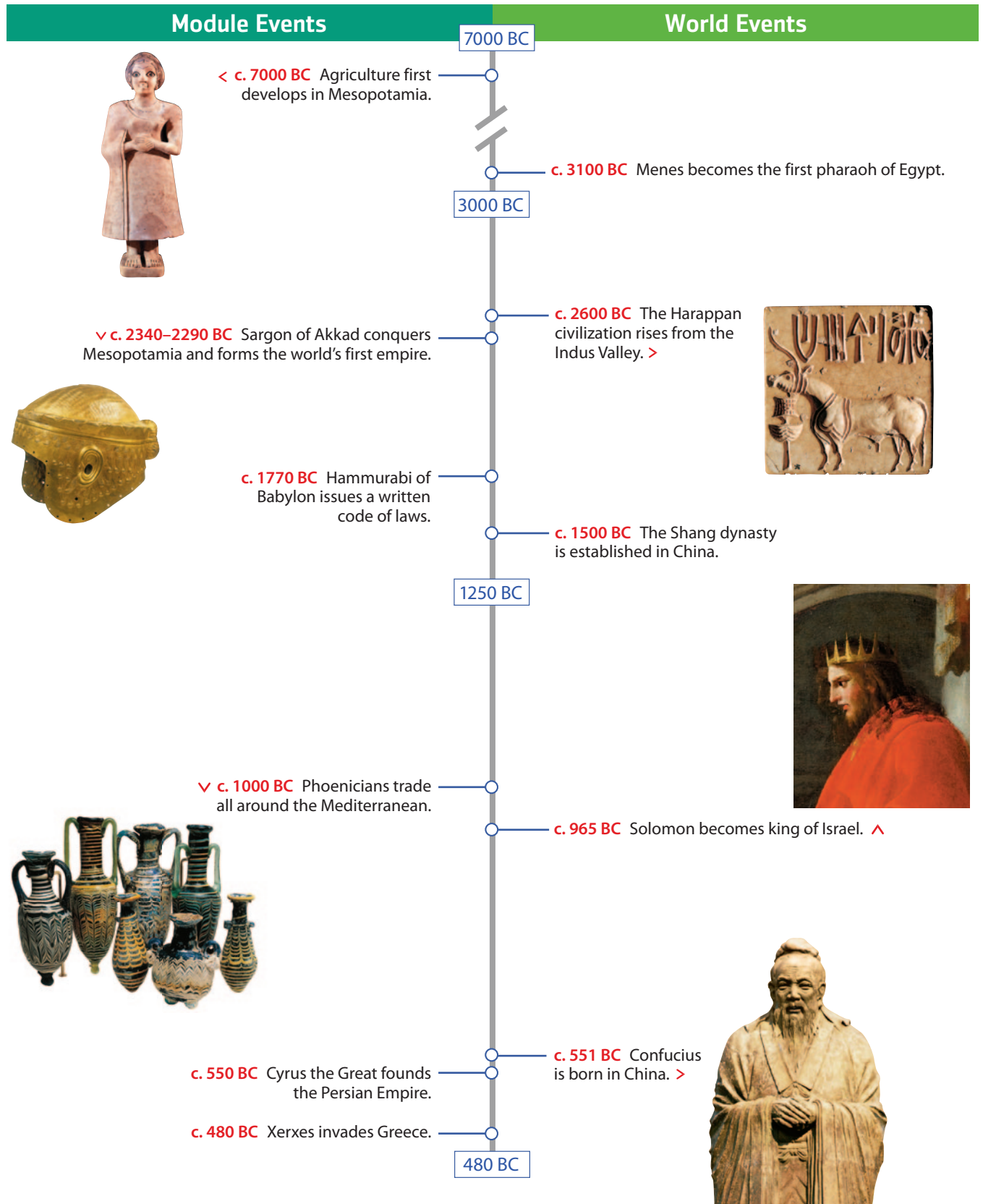


HISTORY

VIDEOS, including...

- The Persians
- Bronze
- Persian Architecture
- Persia's Royal Road

- Document-Based Investigations
- Graphic Organizers
- Interactive Games
- Interactive Map: River Valley Civilizations
- Image with Hotspots: The City-State of Ur
- Image with Hotspots: Hittite Iron Making



Reading Social Studies

THEME FOCUS:

Politics, Science and Technology

This module introduces you to a region in Southwest Asia called Mesopotamia, the home of the world's first civilization. You will read about what made this area one where civilizations could begin and grow. You will learn about one group of people—the Sumerians—and their great advances in science and technology. You will also read about military empires that invaded Mesopotamia and brought their own ideas of governing and politics to the area. These included the great Persian Empire, which ruled much of Southwest Asia. The effect of the contributions of the different peoples in this area is still felt in the modern world. These contributions include the first cities, the first system of writing, and the first alphabet.

READING FOCUS:

Main Ideas in Social Studies

Have you ever set up a tent? If you have, you know that one pole provides structure and support for the whole tent. A paragraph has a similar structure. One idea—the main idea—provides support and structure for the whole paragraph.

Identify Main Ideas Most paragraphs written about history include a main idea that is stated clearly in a sentence. At other times, the main idea is suggested, not stated. However, that idea still shapes the paragraph's content and the meaning of all of the facts and details in it.

Identify Main Ideas

1. Read the paragraph.
Ask yourself, "What is this paragraph mostly about?"
2. List the important facts and details that relate to that topic.
3. Ask yourself, "What seems to be the most important point the writer is making about the topic?" Or ask, "If the writer could say only one thing about this paragraph, what would it be?" **This is the main idea of the paragraph.**

Having people available to work on different jobs meant that society could accomplish more. Large projects, such as constructing buildings and digging irrigation systems, required specialized workers, managers, and organization. To complete these projects, the Mesopotamians needed structure and rules. Structure and rules could be provided by laws and government.

Topic:

The paragraph talks about people, jobs, and structure.

+

Facts and Details:

- People working on different jobs needed structure.
- Laws and government provided this structure.

=

Main Idea:

Having people in a society work on many different jobs led to the creation of laws and government.

You Try It!

Read the following passage, and then answer the questions below.

The Sumerians made one of the greatest cultural advances in history. They developed cuneiform (kyoo-NEE-uh-fohrm), the world's first system of writing. But Sumerians did not have pencils, pens, or paper. Instead, they used sharp tools called styluses to make wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets.

Earlier written communication had used pictographs, or picture symbols. Each pictograph represented an object, such as a tree or an animal. But in cuneiform, symbols could also represent syllables, or basic parts of words. As a result, Sumerian writers could combine symbols to express more complex ideas such as “joy” or “powerful.”

Sumerians first used cuneiform to keep business records. A scribe, or writer, would be hired to document business transactions or keep track of the items people bought and sold. Government officials and temples also hired scribes to keep their records, including records of taxes that were collected. Becoming a scribe was a way to move up in social class.

Answer these questions based on the passage you just read.

1. Reread the first paragraph. What is its main idea?
2. What is the main idea of the third paragraph? Reread the second paragraph. Is there a sentence that expresses the main idea of the paragraph? What is that main idea? Write a sentence to express it.
3. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the entire passage?
 - a. Cuneiform had a positive effect on Sumerian society.
 - b. The Sumerians invented many helpful devices.

As you read this module, find the main ideas of the paragraphs you are studying.

Key Terms and People

Lesson 1

Fertile Crescent
silt
civilization
irrigation
canals
surplus
division of labor

Lesson 2

rural
urban
city-state
Gilgamesh
Sargon
empire
polytheism
priests
social hierarchy
cuneiform
pictographs
scribe
epics
architecture
ziggurat

Lesson 3

monarch
Hammurabi
Hammurabi's Code
chariot
Nebuchadnezzar

Lesson 4

alphabet

Lesson 5

Cyrus the Great
cavalry
Darius I
Persian Wars
Xerxes I



Geography of the Fertile Crescent

The Big Idea

The valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were the site of the world's first civilizations.

Main Ideas

- The rivers of Southwest Asia supported the growth of civilization.
- New farming techniques led to the growth of cities.

Key Terms and People

Fertile Crescent
silt
civilization
irrigation
canals
surplus
division of labor

If YOU were there . . .

You are a farmer in Southwest Asia about 6,000 years ago. You live near a slow-moving river, with many shallow lakes and marshes. The river makes the land in the valley rich and fertile, so you can grow wheat and dates. But in the spring, raging floods spill over the riverbanks, destroying your fields. In the hot summers, you are often short of water.

How can you control the waters of the river?

Rivers Support the Growth of Civilization

Early peoples settled where crops would grow. Crops usually grew well near rivers, where water was available and regular floods made the soil rich. One region in Southwest Asia was especially well suited for farming. It lay between two rivers.

The Land Between the Rivers The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are the most important physical features of the region sometimes known as Mesopotamia (mes-uh-puh-TAY-mee-uh). *Mesopotamia* means “between the rivers” in Greek.

As you can see on the map, the region called Mesopotamia lies between Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf. The region is part of a larger area called the **Fertile Crescent**, a large arc of rich, or fertile, farmland. The Fertile Crescent extends from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

In ancient times, Mesopotamia was actually made of two parts. Northern Mesopotamia was a plateau bordered on the north and the east by mountains. Southern Mesopotamia was a flat plain. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flowed down from the hills into this low-lying plain.

The Rise of Civilization Hunter-gatherer groups first settled in Mesopotamia more than 12,000 years ago. Over time, these people learned how to plant crops to grow their own food. Every year, floods on the Tigris and Euphrates

Rivers brought **silt**, a mixture of rich soil and tiny rocks, to the land. The fertile silt made the land ideal for farming.

The first farm settlements formed in Mesopotamia as early as 7000 BC. Farmers grew wheat, barley, and other types of grain. Livestock, birds, and fish were also good sources of food. Plentiful food led to population growth, and villages formed. Eventually, these early villages developed into the world's first civilization.

A **civilization** is an organized society within a specific area. Civilizations often include large cities in which different social classes of people live. Writing, formal education, art, and architecture are features of civilizations. In civilizations, governments are made up of leaders or family groups. The governments make decisions that help the civilization develop. These characteristics improve people's quality of life.

In an established civilization, a government makes economic decisions to help society develop. For example, as populations grow, decisions have to be made about how to effectively produce and distribute food.

Reading Check

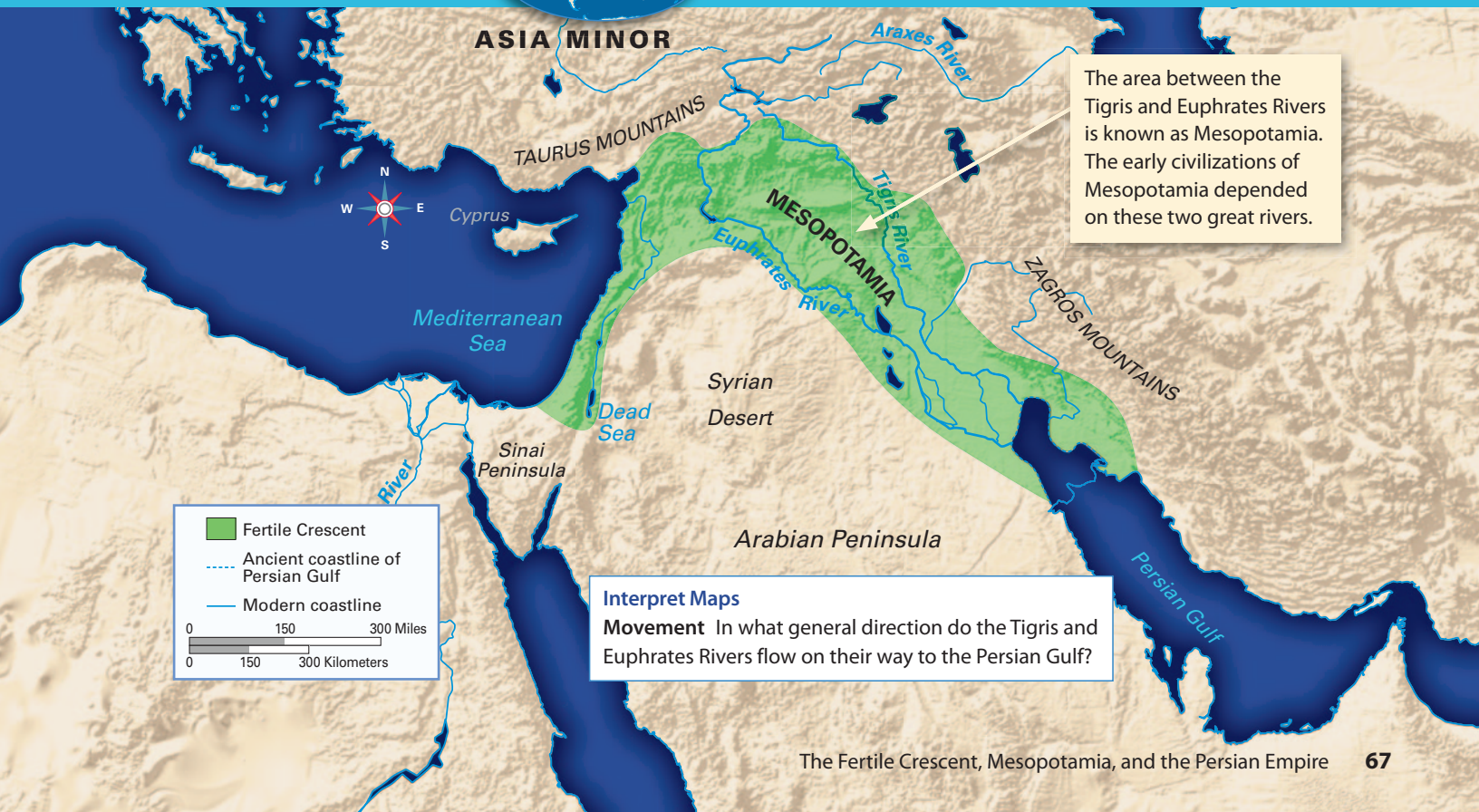
Synthesize Which characteristic of a civilization do you think is most important? Why?

Farming and Cities

Although Mesopotamia had fertile soil, farming wasn't easy there. The region received little rain. This meant that water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers depended on how much rain fell in eastern Asia Minor, where the two rivers began. When a great amount of rain fell there, water levels got very high. Flooding destroyed crops, killed livestock, and washed away homes. During a drought, a time of little or no rain,

 Explore ONLINE!

The Fertile Crescent



water levels became too low. Crops dried up, and there was little water for livestock. Famine could therefore result from either too much or too little rain. Farmers knew they needed a way to control the rivers' flow.

Controlling Water To solve their problems, Mesopotamians used **irrigation**, a way of supplying water to an area of land. To irrigate their land, they dug out large storage basins to hold water supplies. Then they dug **canals**, human-made waterways, that connected these basins to a network of ditches. These ditches brought water to the fields. To protect their fields from flooding, farmers constructed dams and built up the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. This helped to control the flow of water and held back floodwaters when river levels were high.

The Mesopotamians used all the resources the rivers provided. In addition to using water for crops, they used clay from the riverbanks to create bricks for buildings. The construction of buildings and irrigation systems is an example of why early societies in Mesopotamia are considered civilizations. This construction required Mesopotamian society to be organized. Mesopotamians made good decisions to help sustain growing populations.

Irrigation systems were very important to the growth of cities. Mesopotamian kings had an obligation to construct and maintain these systems. Irrigation increased the amount of food farmers grew. In fact, farmers could produce a food **surplus**, or more than they needed. Farmers also used irrigation to water grazing areas for cattle and sheep. As a result, Mesopotamians ate a variety of foods. Fish, meat, wheat, barley, and dates were plentiful.

Irrigation and Civilization

Early farmers faced the challenge of learning how to control the flow of river water to their fields in both rainy and dry seasons.

1. Early settlements in Mesopotamia were located near rivers. Water was not controlled, and flooding was a major problem.



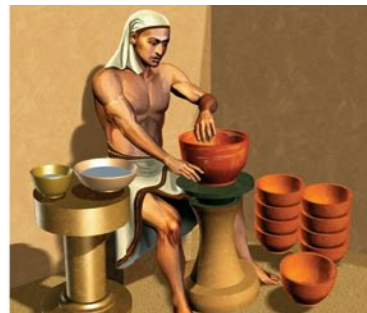
2. Later, people built canals to protect houses from flooding and move water to their fields.



3. With irrigation, the people of Mesopotamia were able to grow more food.



4. Food surpluses allowed some people to stop farming and concentrate on other jobs, such as making clay pots or tools.



A More Productive Society Because irrigation made farmers more productive, fewer people needed to farm. Some people became free to do other jobs. As a result, new occupations developed. For the first time, people were able to focus on other technological improvements.

Toolmakers began to make tools out of metal. This development brought an end to the Neolithic Era and the beginning of the Copper Age. Copper could be used to make arrowheads or knives.

It took special knowledge and skills to work with metal. Some people were able to devote all of their time to finding raw metal and shaping it into tools. Others focused on tasks such as weaving cloth or making pottery. An arrangement in which workers specialize in a particular task or job is called a **division of labor**. Societies with a division of labor can become more complex than ones that lack specialization.

Having people available to work on different jobs meant that society could accomplish more. Large projects, such as constructing buildings and digging irrigation systems, required specialized workers, managers, and organization. To complete these projects, the Mesopotamians needed structure and rules. Structure and rules could be provided by laws and government.



As settlements developed, they eventually became cities.

The Appearance of Cities Over time, Mesopotamian settlements grew in size and complexity. They gradually developed into cities between 4000 and 3000 BC.

Despite the growth of cities, society in Mesopotamia was still based on agriculture. Most people still worked in farming jobs. However, cities were becoming important places. People traded goods there, and cities provided places to keep surplus foods grown on farmland. Cities were the political, religious, cultural, and economic centers of civilization.

Summary and Preview Mesopotamia's rich, fertile lands supported productive farming, which led to the development of cities. In the next lesson, you will learn about some of the first city builders.

Reading Check

Analyze Causes
Why did the Mesopotamians create irrigation systems?

Lesson 1 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** Where was Mesopotamia?

b. Explain How did the Fertile Crescent get its name?

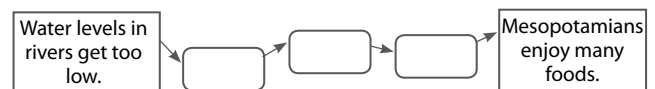
c. Evaluate What was the most important factor in making Mesopotamia's farmland fertile?
- a. Describe** Why did farmers need to develop a system to control their water supply?

b. Explain In what ways did a division of labor contribute to the growth of Mesopotamian civilization?

c. Elaborate How might running large projects prepare people for running a government?

Critical Thinking

- Identify Cause and Effect** Farmers who used the rivers for irrigation were part of a cause-effect chain. Use a chart like this one to show that chain.



History and Geography

River Valley Civilizations

All of the world's earliest civilizations had something in common—they all arose in river valleys that were perfect locations for farming. Three key factors made river valleys good for farming. First, the fields that bordered the rivers were flat, which made it easier for farmers to plant crops. Second, the soils were nourished by flood deposits and silt, which made them very fertile. Finally, the river provided the water that farmers needed for irrigation. As many societies do today, people living in Mesopotamia modified their environment to take advantage of the natural resources the rivers offered.

A F R I C A

EGYPT

Memphis

Nile River

E U R O P E

Black Sea

Caspian Sea

MESOPOTAMIA

Tigris River

Euphrates River

Ur

Red Sea

ARABIAN PENINSULA

From Village to City With the development of agriculture, people settled into farming villages. Over time, some of these villages grew into large cities. These ancient ruins are near Memphis, Egypt.



Natural Highways River travel allowed early civilizations to trade goods and ideas. These people are traveling on the Euphrates River, one of the two main rivers of ancient Mesopotamia.



ASIA



New Activities Food surpluses allowed people to pursue other activities, such as crafts, art, and writing. This tile designer lives in the Indus Valley.



Gift of the River River water was key to farming in early civilizations. This farmer is using water from the Huang He (Yellow River) in China to water her crops.

Mohenjo Daro
Harappa
INDUS VALLEY
Indus River

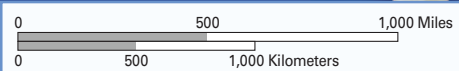
HIMALAYAS
Ganges River

INDIA

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

Huang He (Yellow River)
CHINA
Chang Jiang (Yangzi River)



INDIAN OCEAN

Interpret Maps

- 1. Human-Environment Interaction** Why did the first civilizations all develop in river valleys?
- 2. Location** Where were the four earliest river valley civilizations located?



The Sumerians

The Big Idea

The Sumerians developed the first civilization in Mesopotamia.

Main Ideas

- The Sumerians created the world's first advanced society.
- Religion played a major role in Sumerian society.
- The Sumerians invented the world's first writing system.
- Technical advances and inventions changed Sumerian lives.
- Many types of art developed in Sumer.

Key Terms and People

rural
 urban
 city-state
 Gilgamesh
 Sargon
 empire
 polytheism
 priests
 social hierarchy
 cuneiform
 pictographs
 scribe
 epics
 architecture
 ziggurat

If YOU were there . . .

You are a crafter living in one of the cities of Sumer. Thick walls surround and protect your city, so you feel safe from the armies of other city-states. But you and your neighbors are fearful of other beings—the many gods and spirits that you believe are everywhere. They can bring illness or sandstorms or bad luck.

How might you protect yourself from gods and spirits?

An Advanced Society

In southern Mesopotamia, a people known as the Sumerians (soo-MER-ee-unz) developed the world's first civilization. No one knows where they came from or when they moved into the region. However, by 3000 BC, several hundred thousand Sumerians had settled in Mesopotamia, in a land they called Sumer (soo-muhr). There they created an advanced society.

The City-States of Sumer Most people in Sumer were farmers. They lived mainly in **rural**, or countryside, areas. The centers of Sumerian society, however, were the **urban**, or city, areas. The first cities in Sumer had about 10,000 residents. Over time, the cities grew. Historians think that by 2000 BC, some of Sumer's cities had more than 100,000 residents.

As a result, the basic political unit of Sumer combined the two areas. This unit was called a city-state. A **city-state** consisted of a city and all the countryside around it. The amount of countryside controlled by each city-state depended on its military strength. Stronger city-states controlled larger areas.

City-states in Sumer competed against one another to gain more farmland. Farmland was a resource upon which city-states depended to feed their growing populations. As a result of this competition, city-states built up strong armies to fight for control of farmland. Sumerians also built strong, thick walls around their cities for protection.

Sargon's Empire, c. 2330 BC



Some city-states, such as Mari on the Euphrates River, became important centers of trade. Basic building materials as well as luxury items came to Sumerian city-states along trade routes from as far away as North Africa in the west and Afghanistan in the east. Through trade, the city-states of Sumer became an important part of the region's economy.

Individual city-states gained and lost power over time. By 3500 BC, a city-state known as Kish had become quite powerful. Over the next 1,000 years, the city-states of Uruk and Ur fought for dominance. One of Uruk's kings, known as **Gilgamesh**, became a legendary figure in Sumerian literature.

Rise of the Akkadian Empire In time, another society developed along the Tigris and Euphrates. It was created by the Akkadians (uh-KAY-dee-uhns). They lived just north of Sumer, but they were not Sumerians. They even spoke a different language than the Sumerians did. In spite of their differences, however, the Akkadians and the Sumerians lived in peace for many years.

That peace was broken in the 2300s BC when a leader named **Sargon** sought to extend Akkadian territory. He built a new capital, Akkad (A-kad), on the Euphrates River, near what is now the city of Baghdad. Sargon was the first ruler to have a permanent army. He used that army to launch a series of wars against neighboring kingdoms.

Sargon's soldiers defeated all the city-states of Sumer. They also conquered northern Mesopotamia, finally bringing the entire region under his rule. With these conquests, Sargon established the world's first **empire**, or land with different territories and peoples under a single rule. The Akkadian Empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

Sargon (Ruled 2334–2279 BC)

According to legend, a gardener found a baby floating in a basket on a river and raised him as his own child. This baby later became the Akkadian emperor Sargon. As a young man, Sargon served Ur-Zababa, the king of Kish. Sargon later rebelled against the Sumerian ruler, took over his city, and built Akkad into a military power.

He was among the first military leaders to use soldiers armed with bows and arrows. Sargon gained the loyalty of his soldiers by eating with them every day.

Analyze

Why were Sargon's soldiers loyal to him?

**Reading Check**

Summarize How did Sargon build an empire?

Academic Vocabulary
role a part or function

Sargon was emperor, or ruler of his empire, for more than 50 years. However, the empire lasted only a century after his death. Later rulers could not keep the empire safe from invaders. Hostile tribes from the east raided and captured Akkad. A century of chaos followed.

Eventually, however, the Sumerian city-state of Ur rebuilt its strength and conquered the rest of Mesopotamia. Political stability was restored. The Sumerians once again became the most powerful civilization in the region.

Religion Shapes Society

Religion was very important in Sumerian society. In fact, it played a **role** in nearly every aspect of public and private life. In many ways, religion was the basis for all of Sumerian society.

Sumerian Religion The Sumerians practiced **polytheism**, the worship of many gods. Among the gods they worshipped were Enlil, the lord of the air, and Inanna, goddess of love and war. The sun and moon were represented by the gods Utu and Nanna. Enki was the lord of wisdom and also the god of fresh water, an important god for a people who relied so much on rivers. According to one Sumerian creation story, both Enlil and Enki were involved in the creation of humankind. Each city-state considered one god to be its special protector.

The Sumerians believed that their gods had enormous powers. Gods could bring a good harvest or a disastrous flood. They could bring illness, or they could bring good health and wealth. The Sumerians believed that success in every area of life depended on pleasing the gods. Every Sumerian had a duty to serve and to worship the gods.

Priests, people who performed religious ceremonies, had great status in Sumer. People relied on them to help gain the gods' favor. Priests interpreted the wishes of the gods and made offerings to them. These offerings were made in temples, special buildings where priests performed their religious ceremonies.

Academic Vocabulary
impact effect, result

Reading Check
Analyze Effects
How did trade affect Sumerian society?

Sumerian Social Order Because of their status, priests occupied a high level in Sumer's **social hierarchy**, the division of society by rank or class. In fact, priests were just below kings. The city-states in Sumer were monarchies, each ruled by a single king or queen. The kings and queens of Sumer claimed that they had been chosen by the gods to rule.

Below the priests were Sumer's skilled craftspeople, merchants, and traders. Trade had a great **impact** on Sumerian society. Traders traveled to faraway places and exchanged grain for gold, silver, copper, lumber, and precious stones.

Below traders, farmers and laborers made up the large working class. Slaves were at the bottom of the social order, but their labor contributed to the Sumerian economy. Farming required many workers, and slaves were an inexpensive source of labor. Many of the slaves in Mesopotamia were foreigners who had been captured in war.

Men and Women in Sumer Sumerian men and women had different roles. In general, men held political power and made laws, while women took care of the home and children. Education was usually reserved for men, but some upper-class women were educated as well.

Some educated women were priestesses in Sumer's temples. Some priestesses helped shape Sumerian culture. One, Enheduanna, the daughter of Sargon, wrote hymns to the goddess Inanna. She is the first known female writer in history.

The Invention of Writing

The Sumerians made one of the greatest cultural advances in history. They developed **cuneiform** (kyoo-NEE-uh-fohrm), the world's first system of writing. But Sumerians did not have pencils, pens, or paper. Instead, they used sharp tools called styluses to make wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets.

Earlier written communication had used **pictographs**, or picture symbols. Each pictograph represented an object, such as a tree or an animal. But in cuneiform, symbols could also represent syllables, or basic parts of words. As a result, Sumerian writers could combine symbols to express more complex ideas such as "joy" or "powerful."

Sumerians first used cuneiform to keep business records. A **scribe**, or writer, would be hired to document business transactions or keep track of the items people bought and sold. Government officials and temples also



Sumerians wrote on clay tablets with a special tool called a stylus.



Sumerian writing developed from early symbols called pictographs. Writers used clay tablets to record business deals. This tablet describes the number of sheep and goats.

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

hired scribes to keep their records, including records of taxes that were collected. Becoming a scribe was a way to move up in social class.

Sumerian students went to school to learn to read and write. But some students did not want to study. A Sumerian story tells of a father who urged his son to do his schoolwork:

“Go to school, stand before your ‘school-father,’ recite your assignment, open your schoolbag, write your tablet. . . . After you have finished your assignment and reported to your monitor [teacher], come to me, and do not wander about in the street.”

—Sumerian essay quoted in *History Begins at Sumer*, by Samuel Noah Kramer

In time, Sumerians put their writing skills to new uses. They wrote works on history, law, grammar, and math. They also created works of literature. They wrote poems about the gods and about military victories. Some of these were **epics**, long poems that tell the stories of heroes. Later, people used some of these poems to create *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the story of the legendary Sumerian king. These new uses of writing changed the cultural life of Sumerians and those who followed them in Mesopotamia.

Advances and Inventions

Writing was not the only great Sumerian invention. These early people made many other advances and discoveries.

Technical Advances Technological innovations and the use of domesticated animals improved the quality of life for many Sumerians. One of the Sumerians’ most important developments was the wheel. They were the first people to build wheeled vehicles, including carts and wagons. Using the wheel, Sumerians invented a device that spins clay as a craftsman shapes it into bowls. This device is called a potter’s wheel.

The plow was another important Sumerian invention. Pulled by domesticated oxen, plows broke through the hard clay soil of Sumer to prepare it for planting.

Reading Check
Form
Generalizations
How was cuneiform first used in Sumer?

The use of plows increased food production.



The Sumerians were among the first people in the world to build sailboats. Transporting goods along one of the great rivers on sailboats was much more efficient than using pack animals or carts with wheels.

Sumerian advances improved daily life in many ways. Sumerians built sewers under city streets. They also invented a clock that used falling water to measure time. They even produced makeup and glass jewelry.

Sumer was one of the places in the world that saw the start of the Bronze Age, when humans began making tools out of metals rather than stone. Sumerians created strong bronze tools that made it easier to construct larger cities.

Math and Sciences Another area in which Sumerians excelled was math. In fact, they developed a math system based on the number 60. Using this system, they divided a circle into 360 degrees. Dividing a year into 12 months—a factor of 60—was another Sumerian idea. Each of the 12 months of the Sumerian calendar was 29 or 30 days long, depending on the phases of the moon. Sumerians also calculated the areas of rectangles and triangles.

Sumerian scholars studied science, too. They wrote long lists to record their study of the natural world. These lists included the names of thousands of animals, plants, and minerals.

The Sumerians also made advances in medicine. They used ingredients from animals, plants, and minerals to produce healing drugs. The Sumerians even catalogued their medical knowledge, listing treatments according to symptoms and body parts.

The Arts of Sumer

The Sumerians' skills in the fields of art, metalwork, and **architecture**—the science of building—are well known to us. The ruins of great buildings and fine works of art have provided us with wonderful examples of the Sumerians' creativity.

Architecture Most Sumerian rulers lived in large palaces. Other rich Sumerians had two-story homes with as many as a dozen rooms. Most people, however, lived in smaller, one-story houses. These homes had six or seven rooms arranged around a small courtyard.

City centers were dominated by their temples, the largest and most impressive buildings in Sumer. A **ziggurat**, a pyramid-shaped temple tower, rose above each city. Outdoor staircases led to a platform and a shrine at the top.

Reading Check
Summarize What areas of life were improved by Sumerian inventions?

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.



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



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

Analyze Visuals

The head of a cow or bull is shown in some of these works. Why were cattle important to Sumerians?

The Arts Sumerian sculptors produced many fine works. Among them are the statues of gods created for temples. Many Sumerian statues are made of clay, which shows that clay was abundant in Sumer. Sumerian artists created large mosaics using clay.

Carving in stone, called relief sculpture, was popular among Sumerian artists. Artists carved scenes of important events into squares of stone, which were then mounted on the walls of a temple. They also sculpted small objects out of ivory and rare woods.

Jewelry was a popular item in Sumer. The jewelers of the region made many beautiful works out of imported gold, silver, and gems. Earrings and other items found in the region show that Sumerian jewelers knew advanced methods for putting gold pieces together. Sumerian artists also worked with other metals, such as copper and bronze, to produce different works of art.

Cylinder seals are perhaps Sumer’s most famous works of art. These small objects were stone cylinders engraved with designs. They required great skill to make. When rolled over clay, the designs would leave behind their imprint. Each seal left its own distinct imprint. As a result, a person could show ownership of a container by rolling a cylinder over the container’s wet clay surface. People could also use cylinder seals to “sign” documents or to decorate other clay objects.

The Sumerians also enjoyed music. Kings and temples hired musicians to play on special occasions. Sumerian musicians played reed pipes, drums, tambourines, and stringed instruments called lyres. Children learned songs in school. People sang hymns to gods and kings. Music and dance provided entertainment in marketplaces and homes.

Reading Check
Make Inferences
 What might historians learn from cylinder seals?

Summary and Preview In this lesson, you learned about Sumerian city-states, religion, and society. You also learned that the Sumerians greatly enriched their society. Next you will learn about the later people who lived in Mesopotamia.

Lesson 2 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Recall** What was the basic political unit of Sumer?
b. Explain What evidence from the text shows that Sumer was an important part of the region’s economy?
c. Form Opinions How do you think Sargon’s creation of an empire changed the history of Mesopotamia? Defend your answer.
2. **a. Identify** What is polytheism?
b. Draw Conclusions Why do you think priests were so influential in ancient Sumerian society?
c. Elaborate Why did farmers benefit by using slaves instead of hiring laborers to work on their farms?
3. **a. Identify** What is cuneiform?
b. Analyze Why do you think writing is one of history’s most important cultural advances?
c. Elaborate What current leader would you choose to write an epic about, and why?
4. **a. Recall** What were two early uses of the wheel?

- b. Make Inferences** Why was the invention of the plow so important to the Sumerians?
- c. Summarize** How did the Sumerian idea of dividing the calendar into 12 months relate to their math system?
5. **a. Make Inferences** What facts about architecture show the social hierarchy that existed in Sumerian society?

Critical Thinking

6. **Summarize** Write a summary sentence for each of the following characteristics of Sumerian society: cities, government, religion, society. Then write a sentence summarizing Sumerian civilization.
7. **Analyze Effects** In a chart like this one, list at least five Sumerian advances or achievements. Then list an effect for each Sumerian advance or achievement.

Advance/Achievement	Effect

Literature in History

A Sumerian Epic

Word Help

menacing threatening

succor help

tempest storm

felled cut down

① Shamash, the sun-god, supports Gilgamesh. *What human emotion seems to seize Gilgamesh here? How can you tell?*

② *What stops Humbaba in his tracks?*

③ Gilgamesh tries to speak and act bravely, but he is terrified by Humbaba's evil glare.

④ *What effect does Humbaba hope his words will have on Gilgamesh?*

About the Reading The Epic of Gilgamesh is the world's oldest epic, first recorded—carved on stone tablets—in about 2000 BC. The actual Gilgamesh, ruler of the city of Uruk, had lived about 700 years earlier. Over time, stories about this legendary king had grown and changed. In this story, Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu seek to slay the monster Humbaba, keeper of a distant forest. In addition to his tremendous size and terrible appearance, Humbaba possesses seven splendors, or powers, one of which is fire. Gilgamesh hopes to claim these powers for himself.

As You Read Notice both the human qualities and the godly qualities of Gilgamesh.

from ***The Epic of Gilgamesh***

translated by N. K. Sandars

Humbaba came from his strong house of cedar. He nodded his head and shook it, menacing Gilgamesh; and on him he fastened his eye, the eye of death. Then Gilgamesh called to Shamash and his tears were flowing, "O glorious Shamash, I have followed the road you commanded but now if you send no succor how shall I escape?" ① Glorious Shamash heard his prayer and he summoned the great wind, the north wind, the whirlwind, the storm and the icy wind, the tempest and the scorching wind; they came like dragons, like a scorching fire, like a serpent that freezes the heart, a destroying flood and the lightning's fork. The eight winds rose up against Humbaba, they beat against his eyes; he was gripped, unable to go forward or back. ② Gilgamesh shouted, "By the life of Ninsun my mother and divine Lugulbanda my father . . . my weak arms and my small weapons I have brought to this Land against you, and now I will enter your house." ③

So he felled the first cedar and they cut the branches and laid them at the foot of the mountain. At the first stroke Humbaba blazed out, but still they advanced. They felled seven cedars and cut and bound the branches and laid them at the foot of the mountain, and seven times Humbaba loosed his glory on them. As the seventh blaze died out they reached his lair. He slapped his thigh in scorn. He approached like a noble wild bull roped on the mountain, a warrior whose elbows were bound together. The tears started to his eyes and he was pale, "Gilgamesh, let me speak. I have never known a mother, no, nor a father who reared me. I was born of the mountain, he reared me, and Enlil made me the keeper of this forest. Let me go free, Gilgamesh, and I will be your servant, you shall be my lord; all the trees of the forest that I tended on the mountain shall be yours. I will cut them down and build you a palace." . . . ④

Word Help

execration a cursing

plunders takes by force

5 The angry air-god Enlil curses the heroes for slaying Humbaba. He takes back the monster's powers and gives them to other creatures and elements of nature. *In your opinion, is Gilgamesh more or less heroic for slaying Humbaba and angering Enlil?*

Enkidu said, "Do not listen, Gilgamesh: this Humbaba must die. Kill Humbaba first and his servants after." But Gilgamesh said, "If we touch him the blaze and the glory of light will be put out in confusion, the glory and glamour will vanish, its rays will be quenched." Enkidu said to Gilgamesh, "Not so, my friend. First entrap the bird, and where shall the chicks run then? Afterwards we can search out the glory and the glamour, when the chicks run distracted through the grass."

Gilgamesh listened to the word of his companion, he took the ax in his hand, he drew the sword from his belt, and he struck Humbaba with a thrust of the sword to the neck, and Enkidu his comrade struck the second blow. At the third blow Humbaba fell. Then there followed confusion for this was the guardian of the forest whom they had felled to the ground. . . .

When he saw the head of Humbaba, Enlil raged at them. "Why did you do this thing? From henceforth may the fire be on your faces, may it eat the bread that you eat, may it drink where you drink." Then Enlil took again the blaze and the seven splendors that had been Humbaba's: he gave the first to the river, and he gave to the lion, to the stone of execration, to the mountain. . . . 5

O Gilgamesh, king and conqueror of the dreadful blaze; wild bull who plunders the mountain, who crosses the sea, glory to him.



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

Connect Literature to History

1. **Analyze** In Sumerian culture, the gods' powers were thought to be enormous. According to this story, what roles do gods play in people's lives?
2. **Make Inferences** Violence was common in Sumerian society. How does the character of Gilgamesh suggest that Sumerian society could be violent?



Military Empires

The Big Idea

After the Sumerians, many cultures ruled parts of the Fertile Crescent.

Main Ideas

- The Babylonians conquered Mesopotamia and created a code of law.
- Invasions of Mesopotamia changed the region's culture.

Key Terms and People

Hammurabi
monarch

Hammurabi's Code
chariot

Nebuchadnezzar

If YOU were there . . .

You are a noble in ancient Babylon, an advisor to the great king Hammurabi. One of your duties is to collect all the laws of the kingdom. They will be carved on a tall block of black stone and placed in the temple. The king asks your opinion about the punishments for certain crimes. For instance, should common people be punished more harshly than nobles?

How will you advise the king?

The Babylonians Conquer Mesopotamia

Although Ur rose to glory after the death of Sargon, repeated foreign attacks drained its strength. By 2000 BC, Ur lay in ruins. With Ur's power gone, several waves of invaders battled to gain control of Mesopotamia.

The Rise of Babylon Babylon was home to one such group. That city was located on the Euphrates River near what is today Baghdad, Iraq. Babylon had once been a Sumerian town. By 1800 BC, however, it was home to a powerful government of its own. In 1792 BC, **Hammurabi** (ham-uh-RAHB-ee) became Babylon's king. He became the city's greatest **monarch** (MAH-nark), a ruler of a kingdom or empire.

Hammurabi's Code Hammurabi was a brilliant war leader. His armies fought many battles to expand his power. Eventually, he brought all of Mesopotamia into his empire, called the Babylonian Empire, after his capital.

Hammurabi's skills were not limited to the battlefield, though. He was also an able ruler who could govern a huge empire. He oversaw many building and irrigation projects, and improved Babylon's tax collection system to help pay for them. He also brought much prosperity through increased trade. Hammurabi, however, is most famous for his code of laws.

Hammurabi's Code was a set of 282 laws that dealt with almost every part of daily life. There were laws on everything from trade, loans, and theft to marriage, injury, and murder. It contained some ideas that are still found in laws today. Specific crimes brought specific penalties. However, social class did matter. For instance, injuring a rich man brought a greater penalty than injuring a poor man.

Hammurabi's Code was important not only for how thorough it was, but also because it was written down for all to see. People all over the empire could read exactly what was against the law.

Hammurabi ruled for 42 years. During his reign, Babylon became the most important city in Mesopotamia. However, after his death, Babylonian power declined. The kings that followed faced invasions from people Hammurabi had conquered. Before long, the Babylonian Empire came to an end.

Reading Check

Analyze Effects

What was Hammurabi's most important accomplishment?

DOCUMENT-BASED INVESTIGATION Historical Source

Hammurabi's Code

The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi is credited with putting together the earliest known written collection of laws. The code set down rules for both criminal and civil law and informed citizens what was expected of them.

196. If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.

197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.

198. If he put out the eye of a freed man, or break the bone of a freed man, he shall pay one gold mina.

199. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, or break the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value.

221. If a physician heal the broken bone or diseased soft part of a man, the patient shall pay the physician five shekels in money.

222. If he were a freed man, he shall pay three shekels.

223. If he were a slave, his owner shall pay the physician two shekels.

—Hammurabi, from the Code of Hammurabi, translated by L. W. King



Analyze Historical Sources

How do you think Hammurabi's code of laws affected citizens of that time?

Invasions of Mesopotamia

Several other civilizations also developed in and around the Fertile Crescent. As their armies battled each other for fertile land, control of the region passed from one empire to another.

The Hittites and Kassites A people known as the Hittites built a strong kingdom in Asia Minor, in what is today Turkey. Their success came, in part, from two key military advantages they had over rivals. First, the Hittites were among the first people to master ironworking. This marked the beginning of the Iron Age, a point in history in which iron was widely used to make tools and weapons. The Hittites made the strongest weapons of the time with iron. Second, the Hittites skillfully used the **chariot**, a wheeled, horse-drawn cart used in battle. The chariots allowed Hittite soldiers to move quickly around a battlefield and fire arrows at their enemy. Using these advantages, Hittite forces captured Babylon around 1595 BC.

Hittite rule did not last long, however. Soon after taking Babylon, the Hittite king was killed by an assassin. The kingdom plunged into chaos. The Kassites, a people who lived north of Babylon, captured the city and ruled for almost 400 years.



The Assyrians Later, in the 1200s BC, the Assyrians (uh-SIR-ee-unz) from northern Mesopotamia briefly gained control of Babylon. However, their empire was soon overrun by invaders. After this defeat, the Assyrians took about 300 years to recover their strength. Then, starting about 900 BC, they began to conquer all of the Fertile Crescent. They even took over parts of Asia Minor and Egypt.

The key to the Assyrians' success was their strong army. Like the Hittites, the Assyrians used iron weapons and chariots. The army was very well organized, and every soldier knew his role.

The Assyrians were fierce in battle. Before attacking, they spread terror by looting villages and burning crops. Anyone who still dared to resist them was killed. After conquering the Fertile Crescent, the Assyrians ruled from Nineveh (NI-nuh-vuh). They demanded heavy taxes from across the empire. Communities that resisted these demands were harshly punished.

Assyrian achievements were not just military. One king of Assyria established a huge royal library at Nineveh. It contained tens of thousands of cuneiform tablets, including legal and administrative documents as well as medical, religious, and literary texts.

The Assyrian Army

The Assyrian Army was the most powerful fighting force the world had ever seen. It conquered using weapons such as iron-tipped spears and arrows.





The Ishtar Gate led into the city of Babylon. Rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar, the city is considered one of the greatest in the ancient world. Archeologists have found and partially reconstructed the Ishtar Gate.

Assyrian kings ruled their large empire through local leaders. Each governed a small area, collected taxes, enforced laws, and raised troops for the army. Roads were built to link distant parts of the empire. Messengers on horseback were sent to deliver orders to faraway officials.

The Chaldeans In 652 BC a series of wars broke out in the Assyrian Empire over who should rule. These wars greatly weakened the empire. Sensing this weakness, the Chaldeans (kal-DEE-unz), a group from the Syrian Desert, led other peoples in an attack on the Assyrians. In 612 BC, they destroyed Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire.

In its place, the Chaldeans set up a new empire of their own.

Nebuchadnezzar (neb-uh-kuhd-NEZ-uhr), the most famous Chaldean king, rebuilt Babylon into a beautiful city. According to legend, his grand palace featured the famous Hanging Gardens. Trees and flowers grew on its terraces and roofs. From the ground the gardens seemed to hang in the air.

The Chaldeans admired Sumerian culture. They studied the Sumerian language and built temples to Sumerian gods.

At the same time, Babylon became a center for astronomy. Chaldeans charted the positions of the stars and kept track of economic, political, and weather events. They also created a calendar and solved complex problems of geometry.

Summary and Preview Many different peoples ruled in the Fertile Crescent after the Sumerians. Some made important contributions that are still valued today. In the next lesson, you will learn about a wealthy trading society that developed along the Mediterranean Sea.

Reading Check

Summarize List in order the peoples who ruled Mesopotamia.

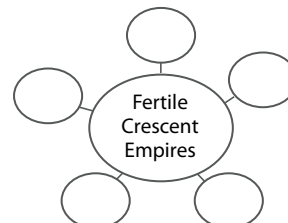
Lesson 3 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Identify** Where was Babylon located?
- b. Analyze** What does Hammurabi's Code reveal about Babylonian society?
2. **a. Describe** What two advantages did Hittite soldiers have over their opponents?
- b. Rank** Which empire discussed in this lesson do you think contributed the most to modern-day society? Why?
- c. Recall** What areas did the Assyrians control by about 900 BC?
- d. Describe** What did the royal library at Nineveh contain?

Critical Thinking

3. **Analyze** What was the significance of Hammurabi's Code in Babylon?
4. **Organize Information** Use a graphic organizer like the one below. List at least one advance or achievement made by each empire in this lesson.





The Phoenicians

The Big Idea

The Phoenicians created a wealthy trading society along the Mediterranean Sea.

Main Ideas

- The Phoenicians built a trading society in the eastern Mediterranean region.
- The Phoenicians developed one of the world's first alphabets.

Key Term

alphabet

If YOU were there . . .

You live in the Phoenician port city of Sidon and have just agreed to be a sailor on a Phoenician trading ship. Your ship will sail from port to port on the Mediterranean Sea, delivering goods to some ports and picking up goods from others. It will be hard work, but you look forward to seeing what other places are like.

What do you think you'll see on this trading trip?

Phoenicia

At the western end of the Fertile Crescent, along the Mediterranean Sea, was a land known as Phoenicia (fi-NEE-shuh). It was not home to a great military power and was often ruled by foreign governments. Nevertheless, the Phoenicians created a wealthy trading society.

Phoenician City-States The major Phoenician city-states along the Mediterranean were established as early as 3000 BC. These included Byblos, Sidon, and Tyre. The Egyptians and Hittites each controlled the area for a time. By 1200 BC, the power of both the Egyptians and the Hittites declined.

The Phoenician cities formed a loose association of city-states, each ruled by a king. Powerful merchant families often influenced the Phoenician kings. Some city-states were also governed by a council of elders. However, the city-states generally remained independent of one another. Phoenicia lost its independence when a king of the powerful Persian Empire conquered it in 538 BC.

The Geography of Phoenicia Today the nation of Lebanon occupies most of what was once Phoenicia. Mountains border the region to the north and east. The western border is the Mediterranean.

Reading Check

Analyze Effects

What effect did geography have on the Phoenician economy?

Phoenicia had few resources. Unlike areas farther inland, Phoenicia lacked good farmland. It did have cedar trees, which provided valuable timber for trading. Even more valuable, however, was Phoenicia's location. Phoenician city-states connected Mediterranean sea routes with land routes that led deep into the Fertile Crescent. With their excellent location and limited resources, Phoenician leaders looked to the sea for a way to trade and expand their economy.

Phoenician Trade and Culture

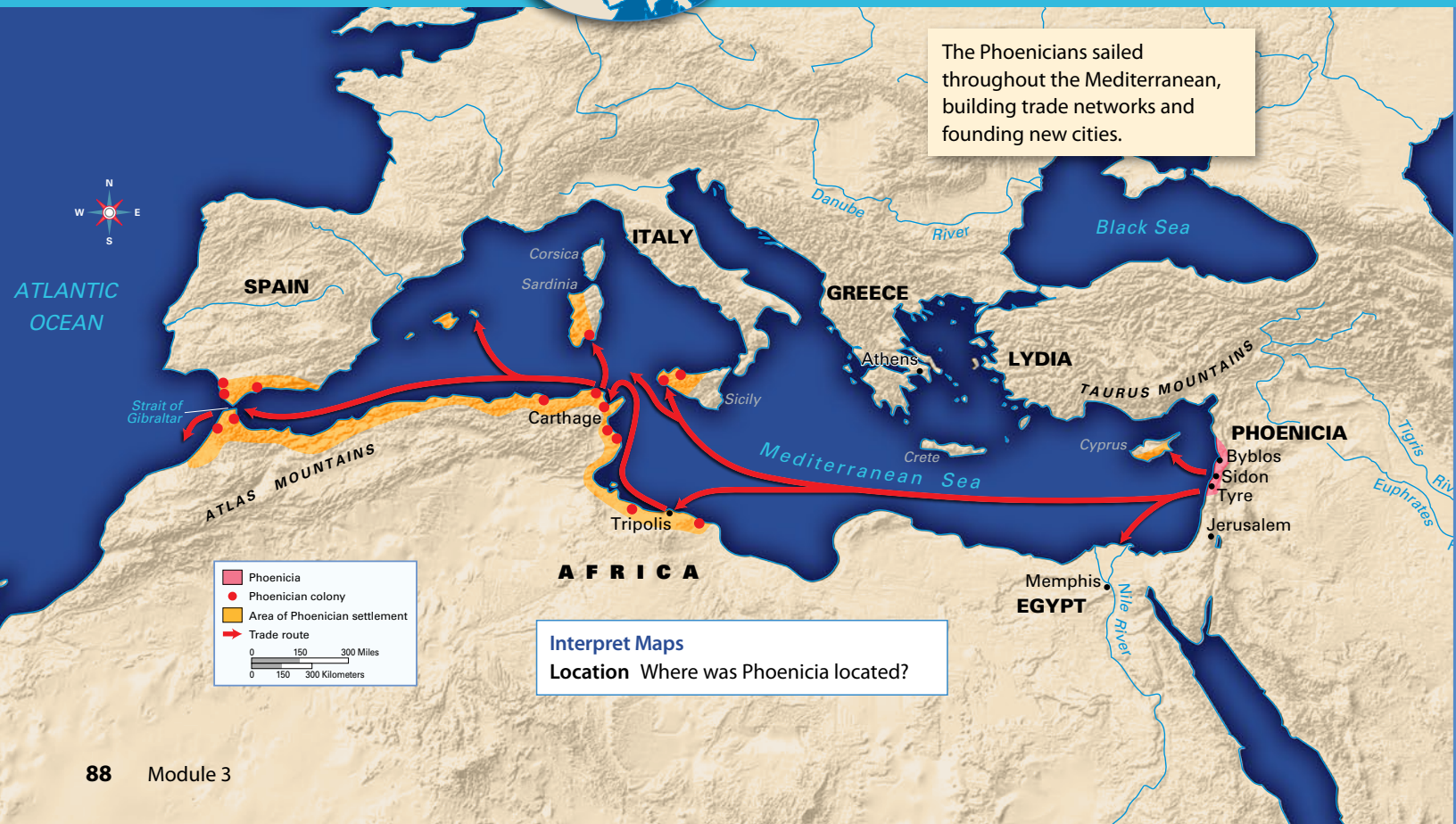
Phoenician trading activity led to important innovations. Phoenicians made significant contributions to navigation, manufacturing, and written language.

The Expansion of Trade Motivated by a desire for trade, the people of Phoenicia became expert sailors. They built one of the world's finest harbors at the city of Tyre. Fleets of fast Phoenician trading ships sailed to ports all around the Mediterranean Sea. Most Phoenician ships had both sails for harnessing wind power and oars for rowing. Traders traveled to Egypt, Greece, Italy, Sicily, and Spain. They even passed through the Strait of Gibraltar to reach the Atlantic Ocean.

The Phoenicians founded several new colonies along their trade routes. Carthage (KAHR-thij), located on the northern coast of Africa, was the most famous of these. It later became one of the most powerful cities on the Mediterranean.

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Phoenicia, c. 800 BC



Tyrian Purple

Before modern times, the process for making purple fabric was very difficult. The Phoenicians discovered how to make a rich purple dye. This dye is known as Tyrian purple because it was made in the city of Tyre. The dye's color came from an unlikely natural resource: sea snails.

Because the dye was hard to make, its supply was always low. The price of purple dye was therefore very high. Wearing purple clothing showed that a person was rich and influential. Ancient kings and emperors especially created demand for the rare and precious color. The profits earned from making and trading this valuable resource helped the Phoenician economy grow.



Synthesize

How did access to natural resources help the Phoenician economy grow?

Phoenicia grew wealthy from its trade. Besides timber, the Phoenicians traded silverwork, ivory carvings, and slaves. Beautiful glass objects also became valuable trade items after crafters invented glassblowing—the art of heating and shaping glass. In addition, the Phoenicians made purple dye from a type of shellfish. They then traded cloth dyed with this purple color. Phoenician purple fabric was very popular with rich people. Phoenicians used their goods to trade for other resources that were not readily available to them, such as ivory, gold, copper, tin, and iron.

Phoenician Culture and Achievements The Phoenicians made several important contributions to early civilization. They established trade and communication routes throughout the Mediterranean region. Different cultures throughout the region came to know one another better as they exchanged goods.



The Phoenicians' technological innovations made sea voyages safer and more efficient.

For example, Phoenician religion adopted new ideas as people interacted with surrounding civilizations. Egyptian, Hittite, Greek, and Roman traditions all shared elements with Phoenicians ones. Because of this interaction, Phoenician gods represented different elements of nature. The people worshipped them with prayer and the construction of statues.

Phoenician ships needed to sail across the wide body of the Mediterranean Sea rather than simply up and down rivers. The Phoenicians developed new navigation techniques, so ships could cross the sea safely without losing their way. They were the first sailors to use Polaris, the North Star, as the point of orientation for establishing directions at sea. Phoenician ships sailed up the coast of Europe and down the coast of Africa using the stars to ensure they were moving in the right direction.

The Phoenicians' most important achievement, however, wasn't trade or sailing skill. Earlier civilizations used pictographs or cuneiform to communicate ideas. To record their activities, however, Phoenician traders developed one of the world's first alphabets. An **alphabet** is a set of letters that can be combined to form words. The Phoenician alphabet had 22 letters. This made it easier to use writing to communicate complex ideas.

Later civilizations, including our own, benefited from Phoenician innovations like this one. In fact, the English alphabet is based on that of the Phoenicians.

Summary and Preview The Phoenicians created a trading society at the western end of the Fertile Crescent. They made important contributions that are still valued today. In the next lesson, you will learn about an empire that conquered nearly all of Asia Minor.

Reading Check

Summarize How did the Phoenicians contribute to the development of early civilizations?

Lesson 4 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Identify** Who ruled Phoenician city-states?

b. Recall What were three major city-states of Phoenicia, and when did they flourish?

c. Analyze How did Phoenicia's lack of resources influence Phoenician leaders?
- a. Identify** For what trade goods were the Phoenicians known?

b. Analyze What evidence from the text shows how Phoenicia grew wealthy?

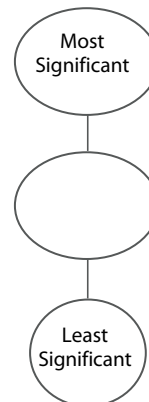
c. Analyze How did Phoenicia increase communication throughout the Mediterranean?

d. Recall What star did the Phoenicians use for navigation?

e. Contrast What is one difference between the Phoenician alphabet and the English alphabet?

Critical Thinking

- 3. Evaluate** Copy the diagram, and use it to rank the significance of the Phoenician contributions to civilization in order of importance. Next to the diagram, write a sentence to explain each of your choices.





The Persian Empire

The Big Idea

Over time the Persians came to rule a great empire, which eventually brought them into conflict with the Greeks.

Main Ideas

- Persia became an empire under Cyrus the Great.
- The Persian Empire grew stronger under Darius I.
- The Persians fought Greece twice in the Persian Wars.

Key Terms and People

Cyrus the Great
cavalry
Darius I
Persian Wars
Xerxes I

If YOU were there . . .

You're a great military leader and the ruler of a great empire. You control everything in the nations you've conquered. One of your advisors urges you to force conquered people to give up their customs. He thinks they should adopt your way of life. But another advisor disagrees. Let them keep their own ways, she says, and you'll earn their loyalty.

Whose advice do you take? Why?

Persia Becomes an Empire

In the 500s BC, a new power arose to the east of the Fertile Crescent. This power was the Persian Empire. Early in their history, the Persians were an unorganized nomadic people. It took the skills of leaders like Cyrus the Great and Darius I to change that situation. Under these leaders, the Persians created a huge empire that became one of the great civilizations of the ancient world.

Cyrus the Great Early in their history, the Persians often fought other peoples of Southwest Asia. Sometimes they lost. In fact, they lost a fight to a people called the Medes (MEEDZ) and were ruled by them for about 150 years. In 550 BC, however, Cyrus II (SY-ruhs) led a Persian revolt against the Medes. His revolt was successful. Cyrus won independence for Persia and conquered the Medes. His victory marked the beginning of the Persian Empire.

Cyrus conquered much of Southwest Asia, including nearly all of Asia Minor, during his rule. Included in this region were several Greek cities that Cyrus took over. He then marched south to Mesopotamia and conquered Babylon, the most powerful city of the time. In Babylon, Cyrus found thousands of Jews enslaved in the city. Cyrus freed the Jews and allowed them to return to their homeland.

Cyrus also added land to the east to his empire. He led his army into central Asia to the Jaxartes River, which we now

call the Syr Darya. When he died in about 529 BC, Cyrus ruled the largest empire the world had ever seen.

Cyrus let the people he conquered keep their own customs. He didn't force people to adopt Persian customs, and he didn't mistreat them. For example, Cyrus allowed the conquered Babylonians to keep worshipping their own gods. He hoped this would make them less likely to rebel. He was right. Few people rebelled against Cyrus, and his empire remained strong. Because of his great successes, historians call him **Cyrus the Great**.

The Persian Army Cyrus was successful in his conquests because his army was strong. It was strong because it was well organized and loyal.

At the heart of the Persian army were the Immortals, 10,000 soldiers chosen for their bravery and skill. In addition to the Immortals, the army had a powerful cavalry. A **cavalry** is a unit of soldiers who ride horses. Cyrus used his cavalry to charge the enemy and shoot at them with arrows. This **strategy** weakened the enemy before the Immortals attacked. Working together, the cavalry and the Immortals could defeat almost any foe.

The Persian Empire Grows Stronger

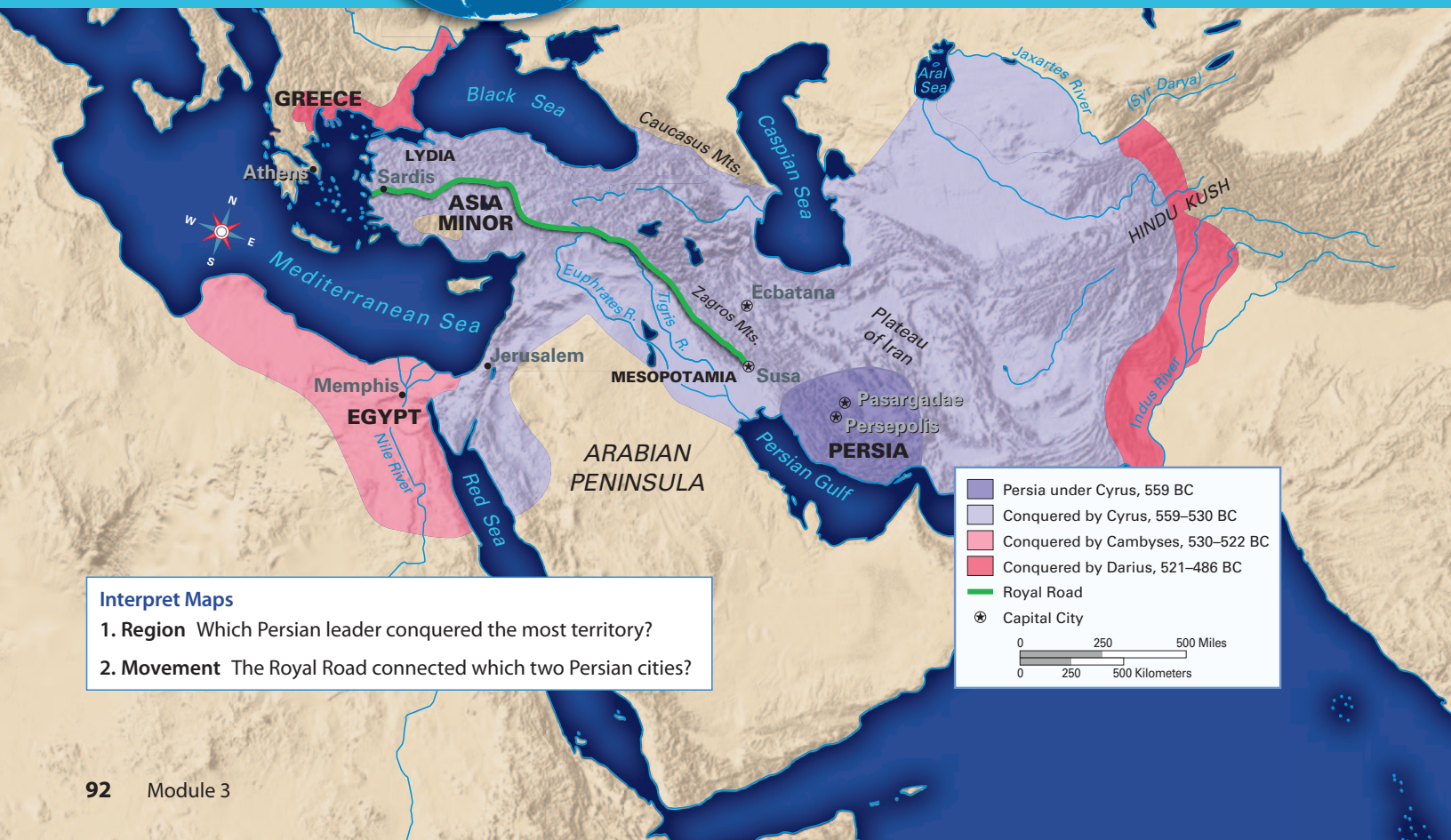
Cyrus's son Cambyses continued to expand the Persian Empire after Cyrus died. For example, he conquered Egypt and added it to the empire. Soon afterward, though, a rebellion broke out in Persia. During this rebellion, Cambyses died. His death left Persia without a clear leader.

Academic Vocabulary
strategy a plan for fighting a battle or war

Reading Check
Find Main Ideas
Who created the Persian Empire?

▶ Explore ONLINE!

The Persian Empire



Interpret Maps

- 1. Region** Which Persian leader conquered the most territory?
- 2. Movement** The Royal Road connected which two Persian cities?



Sitting on a throne, the Emperor Darius is shown meeting with an officer of his empire.

Within four years a young prince named **Darius I** (da-RY-uhs) claimed the throne and killed all his rivals for power. Once he was securely in control, Darius worked to restore order in Persia. He also improved Persian society and expanded the empire.

Political Organization Darius organized the empire by dividing it into 20 provinces. Then he chose governors called satraps (SAY-traps) to rule the provinces for him. The satraps collected taxes for Darius, served as judges, and put down rebellions within their territories. Satraps had great power within their provinces, but Darius remained the empire's real ruler. His officials visited each province to make sure the satraps were loyal to Darius. He called himself king of kings to remind other rulers of his power.

Persian Art, Architecture, and Literature The term *classical civilization* describes civilizations that flourished long ago from the Mediterranean Sea eastward to India and China. These civilizations had advanced economies, governments, and cultures. Persia's rich classical culture included art, architecture, and literature.

For example, Darius built a new capital for the empire. It was called Persepolis. Darius wanted his capital to reflect the glory of his empire, so he filled the city with beautiful works of art. Many carvings lined the city's walls. Statues throughout the city glittered with gold, silver, and precious jewels. Darius also built an impressive palace in his new capital. Its architecture would influence building as far away as India.

The Persians were also skilled artists. Persian artists created delicate items out of gold and gems, many of them decorated with images of animals. Many of these items were used by the king and his family.

During Darius's rule a new religion arose in the Persian Empire. This religion, which was called Zoroastrianism (zawr-uh-WAS-tree-uh-nih-zuhm), taught that there were two forces fighting for control of the universe. One force was good, and the other was evil. According to the Zoroastrian creation story, the good force created the sky, the earth, plants and animals, and the first man. At the same time, the evil force created demons, witches, and monsters.

The priests of the religion urged people to help the side of good in its struggle. This religion remained popular in Persia for many centuries, and some people still practice it today. The holy book of Zoroastrianism, the Avesta, is an important example of early Persian literature.

Persian Society Darius improved Persian society in other ways as well. For example, he standardized the currency, or the form of money used in transactions. Copper, silver, and gold coins each had their own standard worth, weight, and size. This standardization made it easier for Persians to conduct business and to trade with each other.

The Persian government encouraged trade, including by building new ports and seeking new trading partners. These policies stimulated expansion of the empire and led to great economic growth.

Darius had roads constructed to connect various parts of the empire. Royal messengers used these roads to travel quickly throughout Persia. One road, called the Royal Road, was more than 1,700 miles long. Royal messengers had specific places to receive letters and find food.

These roads helped change the way people perceived the world. Traveling great distances from one part of the empire to another became safe and secure. Good roads made it easier for peoples from different regions to interact with one another. Even Persia's enemies admired these roads and the Persian messenger system. For example, one Greek historian wrote:

“Nothing mortal travels so fast as these Persian messengers . . . these men will not be hindered from accomplishing at their best speed the distance which they have to go, either by snow, or rain, or heat, or by the darkness of night.”

—Herodotus, from *History of the Persian Wars*

Reading Check

Summarize How did Darius I change Persia's political organization?

Persian Expansion Like Cyrus, Darius wanted the Persian Empire to grow. In the east, he conquered the entire Indus Valley. He also tried to expand the empire westward into Europe. However, before Darius could move very far into Europe, he had to deal with a revolt in the empire.

The Persians Fight Greece

In 499 BC, several Greek cities in Asia Minor rebelled against Persian rule. To help their fellow Greeks, a few city-states in mainland Greece sent soldiers to join the fight against the Persians.

The Persians put down the revolt, but Darius was still angry with the Greeks. Although the cities that had rebelled were in Asia, Darius was enraged that other Greeks had given them aid. He swore to take revenge on the Greeks.

The Battle of Marathon Nine years after the Greek cities rebelled, Darius invaded Greece. He and his army sailed to the plains of Marathon near Athens. This invasion began a series of wars between Persia and Greece that historians call the **Persian Wars**.

The Athenian army had only about 11,000 soldiers, while the Persians had about 15,000. However, the Greeks won the battle because they had better weapons and clever leaders.

According to legend, a messenger ran from Marathon to Athens—a distance of just over 26 miles—to bring news of the great victory. After crying out “Rejoice! We conquer!” the exhausted runner fell to the ground and died.

The Second Invasion of Greece Ten years after the Battle of Marathon, Darius's son **Xerxes I** (ZUHRK-seez) tried to conquer mainland Greece



This Greek vase shows a Persian soldier (at left) and a Greek soldier in a fight to the death.

again. In 480 BC, the Persian army set out for Greece. This time they were joined by the Persian navy.

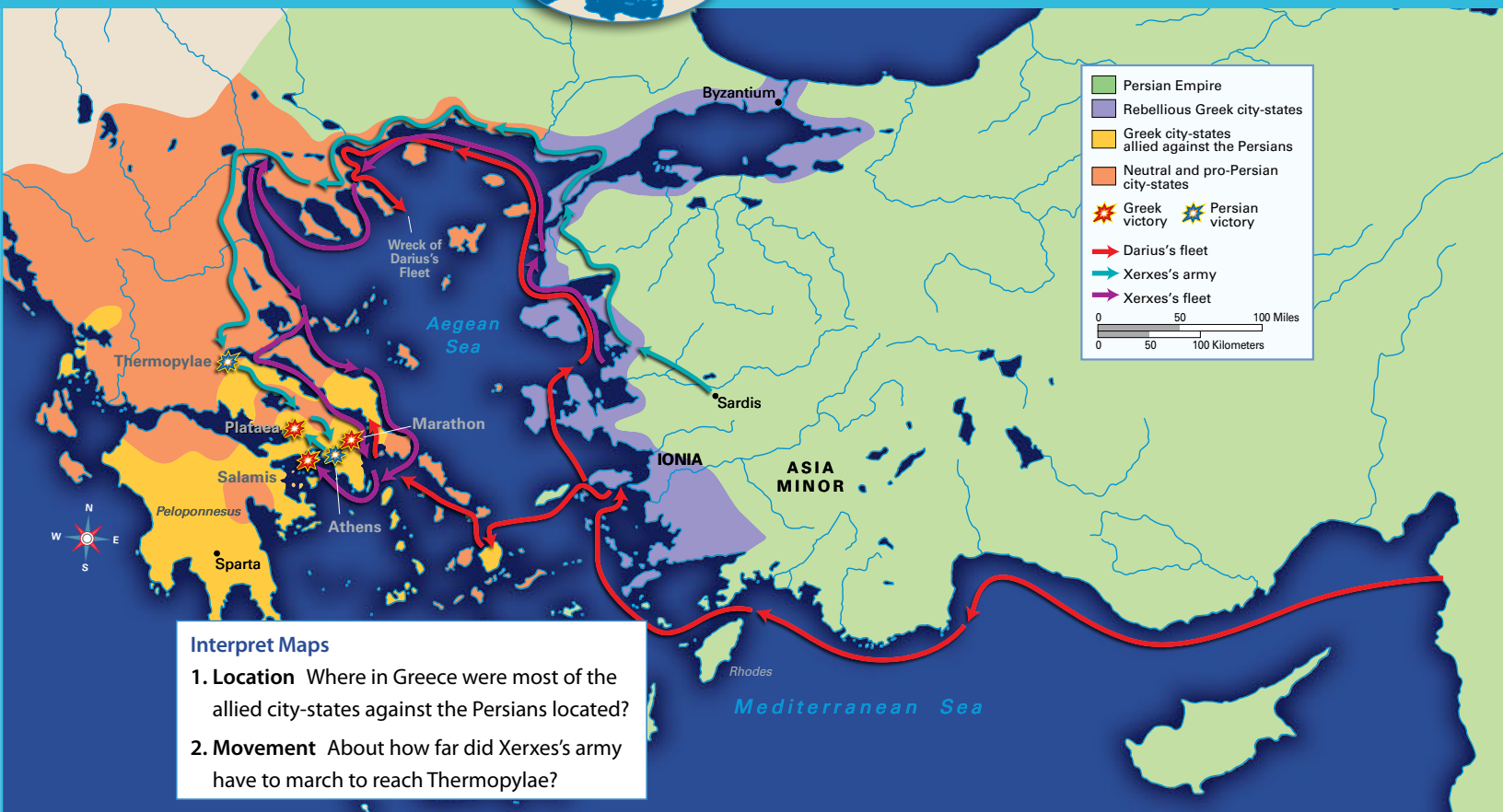
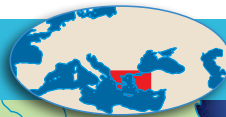
The Greeks prepared to defend their homeland. This time Sparta, a powerful city-state in southern Greece, joined with Athens. The Spartans had the strongest army in Greece, so they went to fight the Persian army. Meanwhile, the Athenians sent their powerful navy to attack the Persian navy.

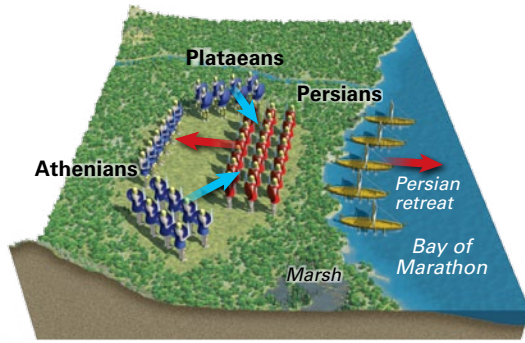
To slow the Persian army, the Spartans sent about 1,400 soldiers to Thermopylae (thuhr-MAH-puh-lee), a narrow mountain pass. The Persians had to cross through this pass to attack Greek cities. For three days, the small Greek force held off the Persian army. Then the Persians asked a traitorous Greek soldier to lead them through another pass. A large Persian force attacked the Spartans from behind. Surrounded, the brave Spartans and their allies fought to their deaths. After winning the battle, the Persians swept into Athens, attacking and burning the city.

Although the Persians won the battle in the pass, the Greeks quickly regained the upper hand. A few days after Athens was burned, the Athenians defeated the Persian navy through a clever plan. They led the larger Persian navy into the narrow straits of Salamis (SAH-luh-muhs). The Persians had so many ships that they couldn't steer well in

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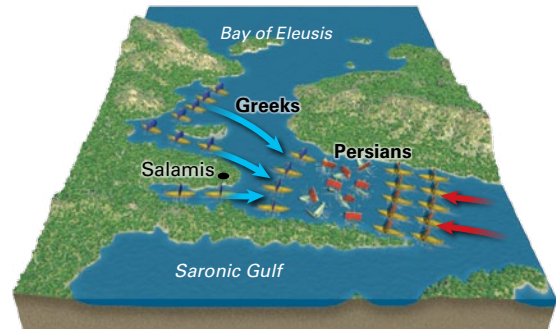
The Persian Wars





Marathon

At Marathon, the Greeks defeated a larger Persian force by luring the Persians into the middle of their forces. The Athenians then surrounded and defeated the Persians.



Salamis

At Salamis, the Greeks destroyed the Persian navy by attacking in a narrow strait where the Persian ships could not maneuver well.

Reading Check

Analyze Events
Why did Darius and Xerxes want to conquer Greece?

the narrow strait. As a result, the smaller Athenian boats easily sank many Persian ships. Those ships that were not destroyed soon returned home.

Soon after the Battle of Salamis, an army of soldiers from all over Greece beat the Persians at Plataea (pluh-TEE-uh). This battle ended the Persian Wars. Defeated, the Persians left Greece.

For the Persians, this defeat was humiliating, but it was not a major blow. Their empire remained strong for more than a century after the war. For the Greeks, though, the defeat of the Persians was a triumph. They had saved their homeland.

Summary The Persian Empire, led by strong rulers, became the largest empire the world had ever seen. The Persian army was powerful, but Athens and Sparta stopped its invasion of Greece.

Lesson 5 Assessment

Review Ideas, Terms, and People

1. **a. Summarize** Describe the empire of Cyrus the Great.
- b. Make Inferences** Why did peoples conquered by Cyrus the Great seldom rebel?
- c. Identify** When Cyrus conquered Babylon, what people did he free, and where did they go?
2. **a. Identify** How did Darius I change Persia's political organization?
- b. Make Generalizations** How did Persia's roads help change people's perception of the world and their interaction with others?
- c. Summarize** What were some examples of Persian architecture, art, and literature with which we associate classical civilizations?
3. **a. Explain** Why did Persia want to invade Greece?
- b. Predict** How might the Persian Wars have ended if the Spartans had not slowed the Persians at Thermopylae?

Critical Thinking

4. **Organize Information** Using a chart like the one below, list the battles discussed in the lesson in the first column. In the other columns, identify who fought, who won, and what happened as a result of each battle.

Battle	Armies	Winner	Result

Social Studies Skills

Interpret Physical Maps

Define the Skill

A *physical* map is a map that shows the natural features and landscape, or *topography*, of an area. It shows the location and size of such features as rivers and mountain ranges. Physical maps also often show an area's *elevation*, or how high above sea level the land is. Topography and elevation often influence human activities. For example, people will live where they can find water and defend themselves. Therefore, being able to interpret a physical map can help you better understand how the history of an area unfolded.

Learn the Skill

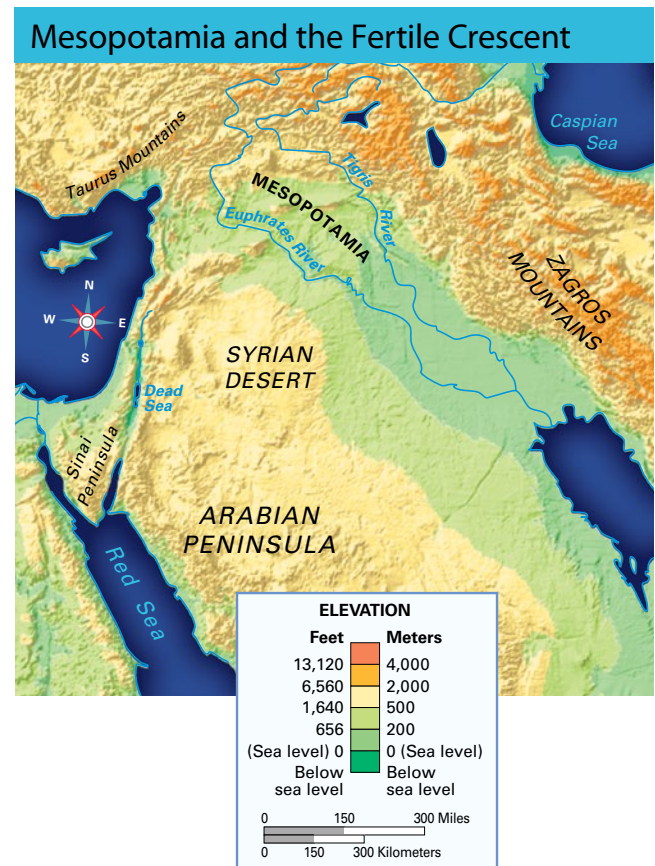
Follow these steps to interpret a physical map.

1. Read the map's title, distance scale, and legend. These will provide basic information about the map's contents.
2. Note the colors used to show elevation. Use the legend to connect colors on the map to elevations of specific places.
3. Note the shapes of the features, such as how high a mountain range is, how far it stretches, and how long a river is. Note where each feature is in relation to others.
4. Use information from the map to draw conclusions about the effect of the region's topography on settlement and economic activities.

Practice the Skill

Use the guidelines to answer these questions about the physical map.

1. What is the elevation of the western half of the Arabian Peninsula?
2. Describe the topography of Mesopotamia. Why would settlement have occurred here before other places on the map?
3. What feature might have stopped invasions of Mesopotamia?



Module 3 Assessment

Review Vocabulary, Terms, and People

Complete each sentence by filling in the blank with the correct term or person.

1. Mesopotamian farmers built _____ to irrigate their fields.
2. While city dwellers were urban, farmers lived in _____ areas.
3. The people of Sumer practiced _____, the worship of many gods.
4. Instead of using pictographs, Sumerians developed a type of writing called _____.
5. Horse-drawn _____ gave the Hittites an advantage during battle.
6. The Babylonian king _____ is famous for his code of laws.
7. Sumerian society was organized in _____, which consisted of a city and the surrounding lands.
8. A ruler named _____ created the Persian Empire.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

Lesson 1

9.
 - a. **Describe** Where was Mesopotamia, and what does the name mean?
 - b. **Analyze** How did Mesopotamian irrigation systems allow civilization to develop?
 - c. **Elaborate** Do you think a division of labor is necessary for civilization to develop? Why or why not?

Lesson 2

10.
 - a. **Identify** Who built the world's first empire, and what did that empire include?
 - b. **Analyze** Politically, how was early Sumerian society organized? How did that organization affect society?
 - c. **Identify** What was the Sumerian writing system called, and why is it so significant?

Lesson 3

11.
 - a. **Describe** What technical achievement of the Hittites marks the beginning of the Iron Age?

- b. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think several peoples banded together to fight the Assyrians?
- c. **Evaluate** Do you think Hammurabi was more effective as a ruler or as a military leader? Why?

Lesson 4

12.
 - a. **Analyze** What choices did the Phoenician leaders make for their economy based on the limited resources of the area?
 - b. **Describe** What were two important developments of the Phoenicians?
 - c. **Draw Conclusions** How did the sail help the Phoenicians to build their economy?

Lesson 5

13.
 - a. **Identify** Who were Cyrus the Great, Darius I, and Xerxes I?
 - b. **Analyze** How did the Greeks use strategy to defeat a larger fighting force?
 - c. **Compare** What similarities do you see between Sumerian and Persian art, architecture, and literature?

Module 3 Assessment, continued

Review Themes

14. **Science and Technology** Which of the ancient Sumerians' technological achievements do you think has been most influential in history? Why?
15. **Politics** Why do you think Hammurabi is so honored for his code of laws?

Reading Skills

Identify Main Ideas For each passage, choose the letter that corresponds to the main-idea sentence.

16. (A) Sumerians believed that their gods had enormous powers. (B) Gods could bring a good harvest or a disastrous flood. (C) They could bring illness, or they could bring good health and wealth.
17. (A) The wheel was not the Sumerians' only great development. (B) They developed cuneiform, the world's first system of writing. (C) But Sumerians did not have pencils, pens, or paper. (D) Instead, they used sharp reeds to make wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets.

Social Studies Skills

Interpret Physical Maps Could you use a physical map to answer these questions? For each question, answer yes or no.

18. Are there mountains or hills in a certain region?
19. What languages do people speak in that region?
20. How many people live in the region?
21. What kinds of water features such as rivers or lakes would you find there?

Focus on Writing

22. **Write to Inform** Write two or three paragraphs to inform readers about the significant contributions of the Mesopotamian leaders you learned about in this module. Include details about Hammurabi and Sargon. Be sure to inform readers about the main ideas of Hammurabi's Code.