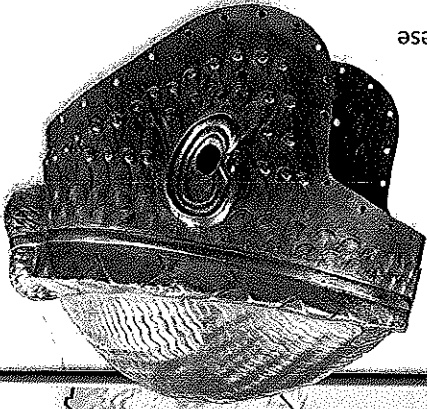


The world's first empires were formed in the Fertile Crescent. Soldiers from these empires wore bronze helmets like this one.



**Paraphrasing** One way to be sure you understand a passage of text is to paraphrase it, or restate it in your own words. Practice paraphrasing sentences and whole paragraphs as you read this chapter. See the lesson, Paraphrasing, on page 672.

**Creating a Poster** Most elementary students have not read or heard much about ancient Mesopotamia. As you read this chapter, you can gather information about that land. Then you can create a colorful poster to share some of what you have learned with a young child.

**FOCUS ON READING AND WRITING**

In this chapter you will learn about the world's oldest civilizations. These civilizations developed in the region of Mesopotamia, part of a larger area known as the Fertile Crescent.

**SECTION 1** Geography of the Fertile Crescent . 116

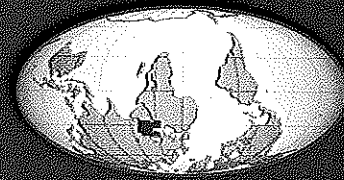
**SECTION 2** The Rise of Sumer..... 122

**SECTION 3** Sumerian Achievements..... 127

**SECTION 4** Later Peoples of the Fertile Crescent ..... 132

**What You Will Learn...**

# History of the Fertile Crescent 7000-500 BC



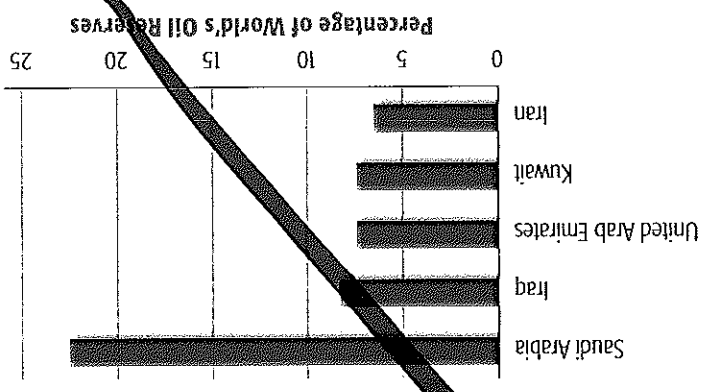
**CHAPTER 5**



Phoenician trading ship

Mediterranean Sea

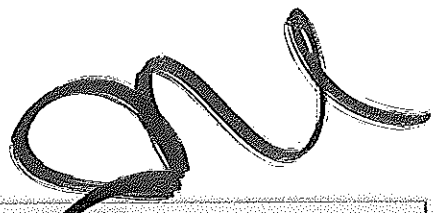
The countries of Southwest and Central Asia contain nearly 60 percent of the world's oil. Saudi Arabia has by far the most oil, with about 22 percent of the world's total.



**Oil Giants**

1. How does the per capita GDP of countries in this region compare to the per capita GDP of the United States?  
 2. Based on the table, which countries seem to have the highest standard of living?

**ANALYSIS SKILL**  
**ANALYZING TABLES**



| COUNTRY                           | FLAG | POPULATION    | AREA (sq mi) | PER CAPITA GDP (U.S. \$) | LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH | INS PER 1,000 PEOPLE |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Tajikistan<br>Dushanbe            |      | 7.2 million   | 55,251       | \$1,100                  | 64.6                     | 328                  |
| Turkey<br>Ankara                  |      | 69.7 million  | 301,383      | \$7,400                  | 72.4                     | 328                  |
| Turkmenistan<br>Ashgabat          |      | 5 million     | 188,456      | \$5,700                  | 61.4                     | 198                  |
| United Arab Emirates<br>Abu Dhabi |      | 2.6 million   | 32,000       | \$25,200                 | 75.2                     | 309                  |
| Uzbekistan<br>Tashkent            |      | 26.9 million  | 172,742      | \$1,800                  | 64.2                     | 280                  |
| Yemen<br>Sanaa                    |      | 20.7 million  | 203,950      | \$800                    | 61.8                     | 286                  |
| United States<br>Washington, D.C. |      | 295.7 million | 3,718,710    | \$40,100                 | 77.7                     | 844                  |

# The Fertile Crescent, 7000-500 BC

Geography Skills

map  
zone

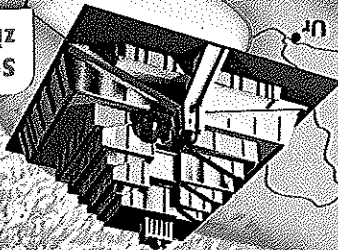
- Regions The Fertile Crescent is a name given by historians to a large area of fertile land in Southwest Asia.
1. Name What two rivers are at the heart of the Fertile Crescent?
  2. Interpret Why do you think this area is called the Fertile Crescent?

**HOT**

**Geography's Impact**

video series  
Watch the video to understand the impact of a system of laws.

Sumerian ziggurat



Babylon



Cuneiform tablet

Tigris River

Euphrates River

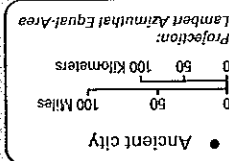
Assyrian chariot



Nineveh

Tyre

Ur



● Ancient city

Persian Gulf

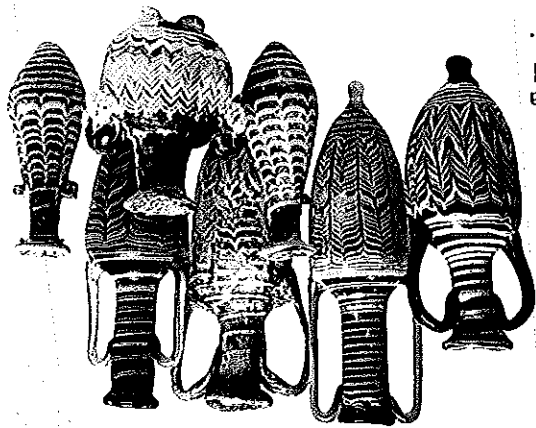
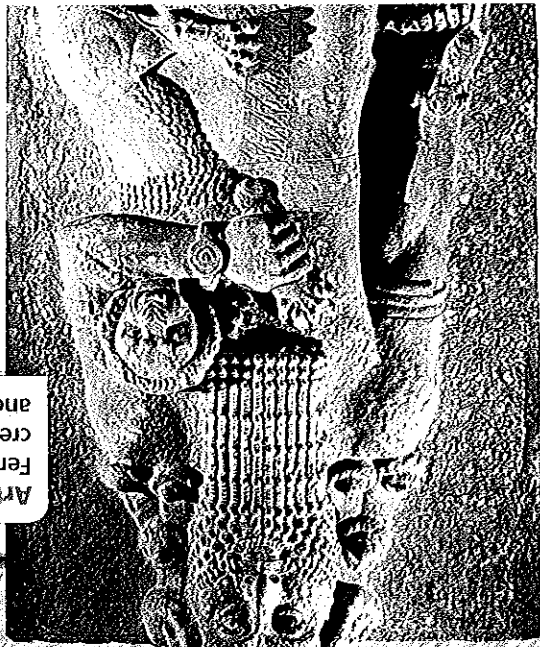
50°E

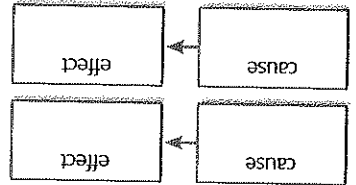
30°N

35°N

Trade Traders brought goods to areas all around the Mediterranean.

Art People of the Fertile Crescent created great art and literature.





As you read, take notes on the cause-and-effect relationship between river valleys and the civilizations that developed around it. Use a graphic organizer like this one to list causes and effects.

**TAKING NOTES**

- Key Terms**
- Fertile Crescent, p. 117
  - silt, p. 117
  - irrigation, p. 118
  - canals, p. 118
  - surplus, p. 118
  - division of labor, p. 118

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

**The Big Idea**

- Main Ideas**
1. The rivers of Southwest Asia supported the growth of civilization.
  2. New farming techniques led to the growth of cities.

**What You Will Learn...**

**SECTION 1**

# Geography of the Fertile Crescent

**IF YOU lived there...**

You are a farmer in Southwest Asia about 6,000 years ago. You live near a slow-moving river that has 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?**

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** In several parts of the world, bands of hunter-gatherers began to settle down in farming settlements. They domesticated plants and animals. Gradually, their cultures became more complex. Most early civilizations grew up along rivers, where people learned to work together to irrigate fields and control floods.

## 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.



FOCUS ON  
READING  
Make sure you  
understand this  
paragraph by  
restating it in your  
own words.

**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 were formed in Mesopotamia as early as 7000 BC. There, 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.

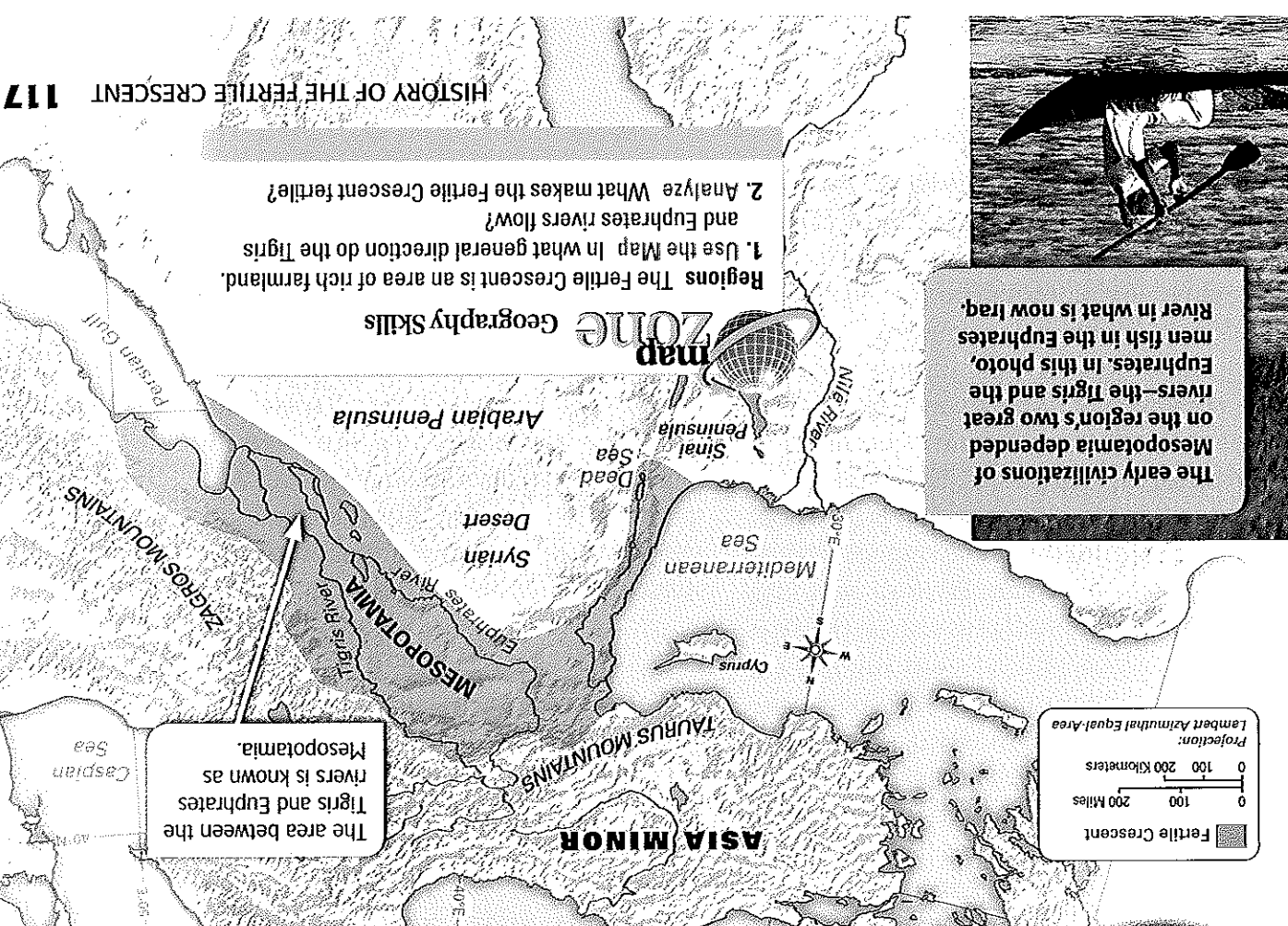
**READING CHECK** Summarizing What made civilization possible in Mesopotamia?

**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 the **Fertile Crescent**, a large arc of rich, or fertile, farmland. As you can see on the map, the Fertile Crescent extends from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. In ancient times, Mesopotamia was made of two parts. Northern Mesopotamia was a plateau bordered on the north and the east by mountains. The southern part of Mesopotamia was a flat plain. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowed down from the hills into this low-lying plain.

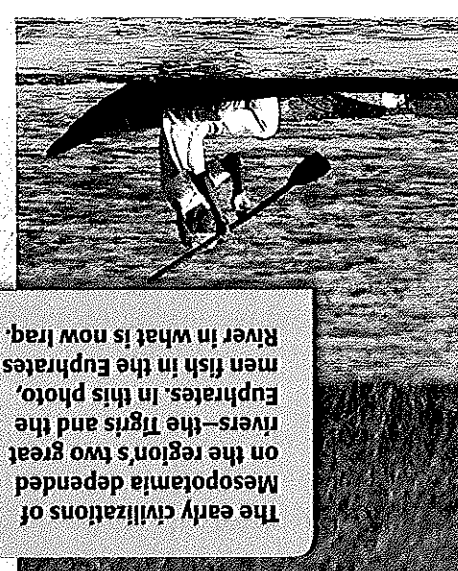
## The Fertile Crescent



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

**Fertile Crescent**  
0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers  
Projection: Lambert Azimuthal Equal-Area

The early civilizations of Mesopotamia depended on the region's two great rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates. In this photo, men fish in the Euphrates River in what is now Iraq.

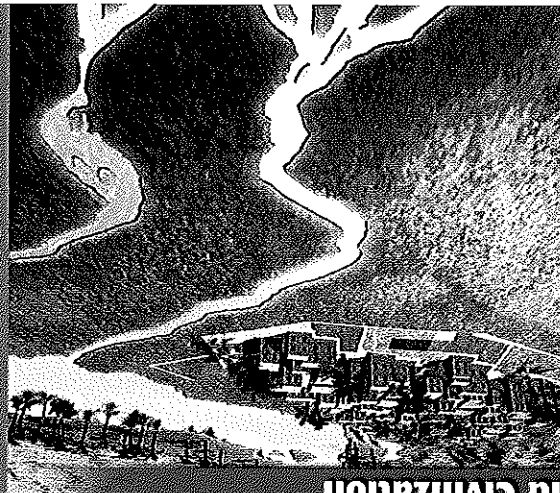


**Regions** The Fertile Crescent is an area of rich farmland. **1.** Use the Map In what general direction do the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow? **2.** Analyze What makes the Fertile Crescent fertile?

### map zone Geography Skills

# 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 continual problem.



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

## 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 rainfall in eastern Asia Minor where the two rivers began. When a great amount of rain fell, water levels got very high. This flooding destroyed crops, killed livestock, and washed away homes. When water levels were too low, crops dried up. Farmers knew that they needed to develop 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 catch rainwater that fell to the north. 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 built up the rivers' banks. These built-up banks held back floodwaters even when river levels were high.

People still build dikes, or earthen walls along rivers or shorelines, to hold back water.



## Food Surpluses

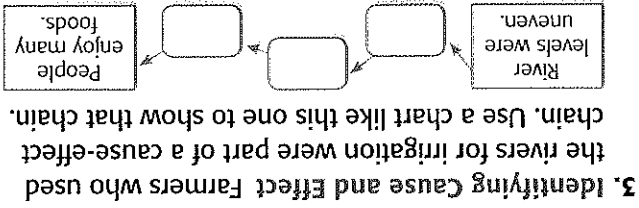
Irrigation increased the amount of food farmers were able to grow. In fact, farmers could produce a food **surplus**, or more than they needed. Farmers also used irrigation to water grazing areas for cattle and sheep. As a result, Mesopotamians ate a variety of foods. Fish, meat, wheat, barley, and dates were plentiful.

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 became crafters, religious leaders, and government workers. The type of arrangement in which each worker specializes in a particular task or job is called a **division of labor**.

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

4. Understanding Geography Think of the images you might use on your poster. Would you want to show an image of the canals or rivers? Can you find pictures to show important features?

**FOCUS ON WRITING**



3. Identifying 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.

gohrw.com  
Online Quiz  
KEYWORD: SK7 HP5

- Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places**
1. 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?
  2. 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 the Mesopotamian civilization?  
c. Elaborate How might managing large projects prepare people for running a government?

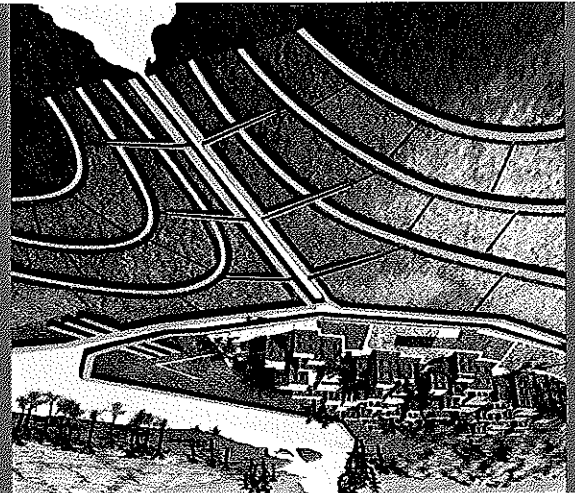
**Section 1 Assessment**

**Appearance of Cities**

Over time, Mesopotamian settlements grew both 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 leaders with power bases.

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

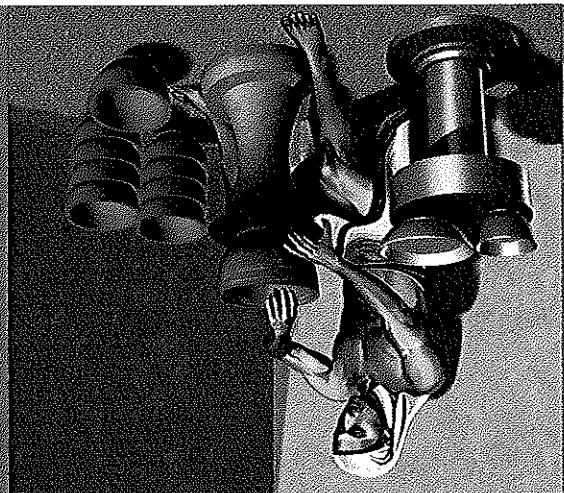


**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** Mesopotamia's rich, fertile lands supported productive farming, which led to the development of cities. In Section 2 you will learn about some of the first city builders.

**READING CHECK** Analyzing Why did the Mesopotamians create irrigation systems?

Cities were the political, religious, cultural, and economic centers of civilization.

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

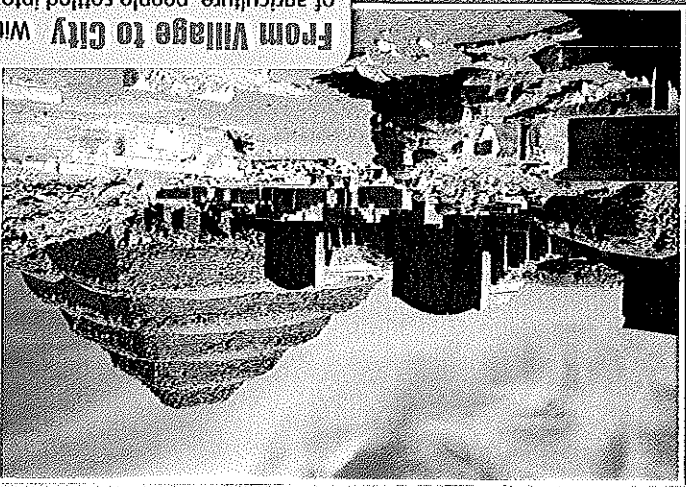
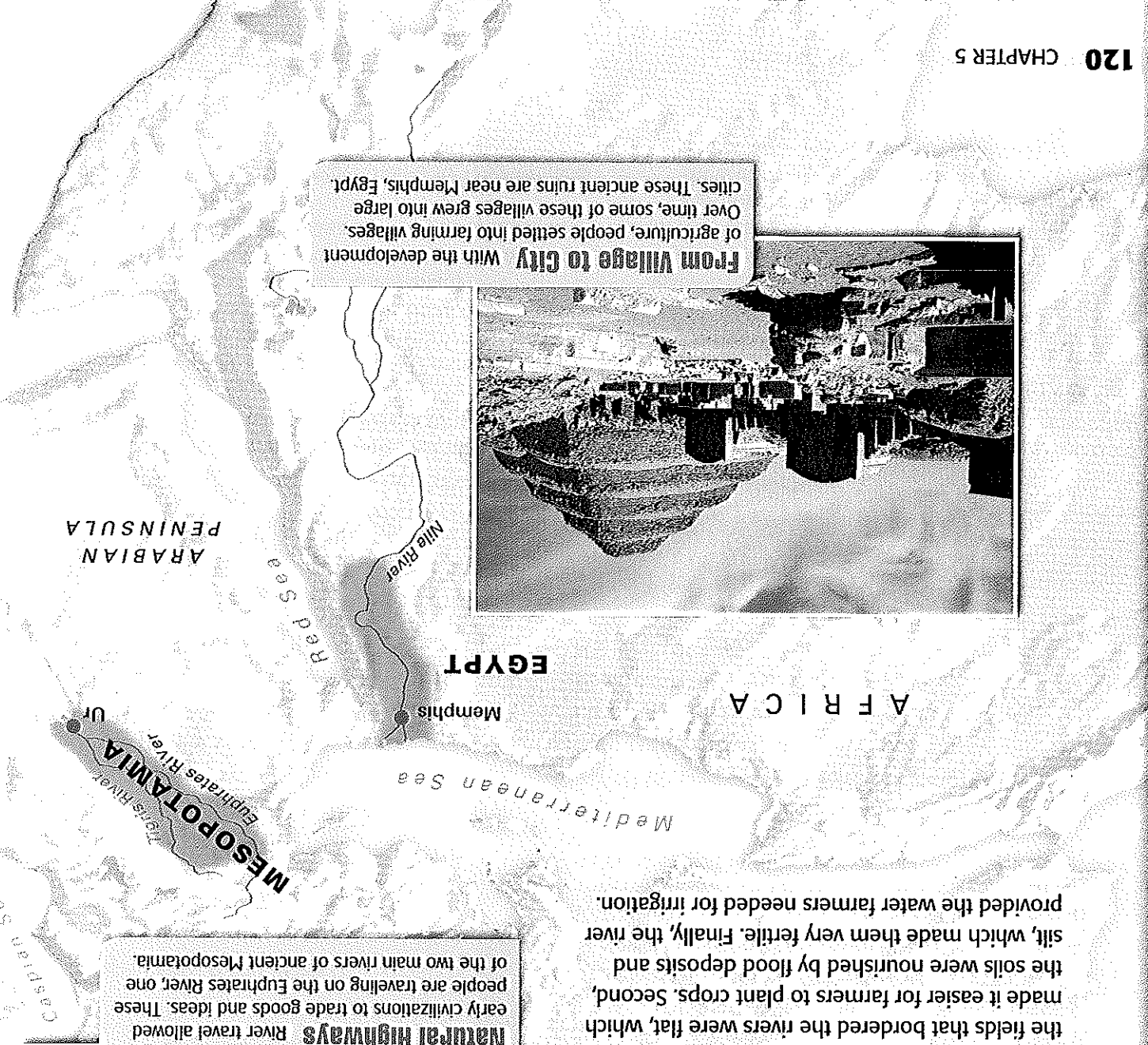


# Geography and History

## River Valley Civilizations

All of the world's earliest civilizations had at least one thing in common—they arose in river valleys that were good 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 farmers needed for irrigation.

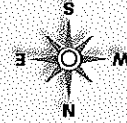
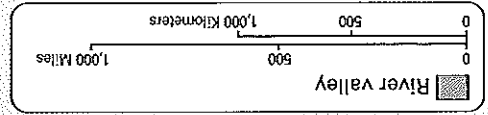
**Natural Highways** River travel allowed early civilizations to trade goods and ideas. These people are traveling on the Euphrates River, one of the two main rivers of ancient Mesopotamia.



**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.



INDIAN OCEAN



Bay of Bengal

Arabian Sea

INDIA

INDUS VALLEY

Mohenjo Daro

Harappa

Ganges River

HIMALAYAS

Chang Jiang (Yangtze River)

CHINA

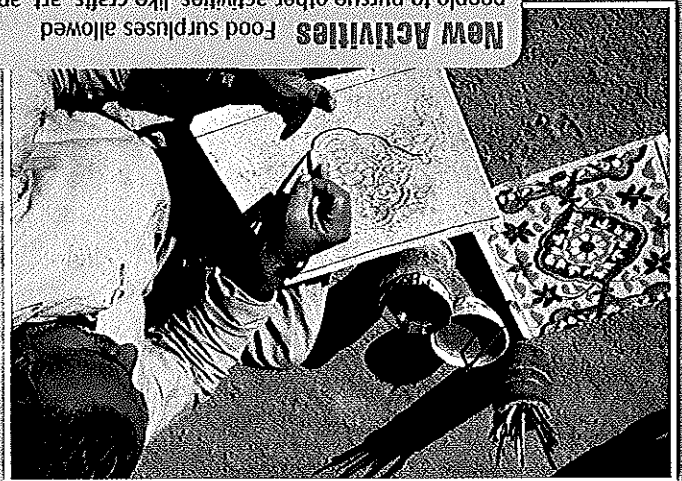
Huang He (Yellow River)

**map Zone** Geography Skills



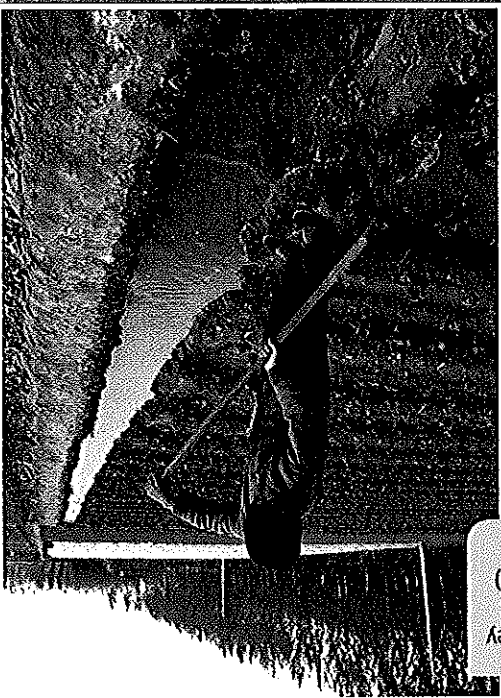
- Human-Environment Interaction Four of the world's earliest civilizations arose on the banks of large rivers.
1. Locate Where were the four earliest river valley civilizations located?
  2. Explain Why did the world's first civilizations all develop in river valleys?

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



ASIA

**Gifts 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.



# The Rise of Sumer

**IF YOU** lived 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 have been taught are everywhere. They can bring illness or sandstorms or bad luck.

**How might you protect yourself from gods and spirits?**

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** As civilizations developed along rivers, their societies and governments became more advanced. Religion became a main characteristic of these ancient cultures. Kings claimed to rule with the approval of the gods, and ordinary people wore charms and performed rituals to avoid bad luck.

## 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. All we know is that by 3000 BC, several hundred thousand Sumerians had settled in Mesopotamia, in a land they called **Sumer** (soo-muhr). There they built an advanced society.

## 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 largest cities had more than 100,000 residents.

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

## SECTION 2

### What You Will Learn...

#### Main Ideas

1. The Sumerians created the world's first advanced society.
2. Religion played a major role in Sumerian society.

#### The Big Idea

The Sumerians developed the first civilization in Mesopotamia.

### Key Terms and Places

- Sumer, p. 122  
 city-state, p. 122  
 empire, p. 123  
 polytheism, p. 124  
 priests, p. 125  
 social hierarchy, p. 125

### TAKING NOTES

As you read, use a chart like the one below to take notes on the Sumerian civilization.

| Characteristics | Notes |
|-----------------|-------|
| Cities          |       |
| Government      |       |
| Religion        |       |
| Society         |       |

Rise of the Akkadian Empire

In time, another society developed along the Tigris and Euphrates. This society was built by the Akkadians (uh-kay-dee-uhms). They lived just north of Sumer, but they were not Sumerians. They even spoke a different language than the Sumerians.

City-states in Sumer fought each other to gain more farmland. As a result of these conflicts, the city-states built up strong armies. Sumerians also built strong, thick walls around their cities for protection. 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.

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. Sargon's huge empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

That peace was broken in the 2300s BC when 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.

In spite of their differences, however, the Akkadians and the Sumerians lived in peace for many years.

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 loyalty from his soldiers by eating with them every day.

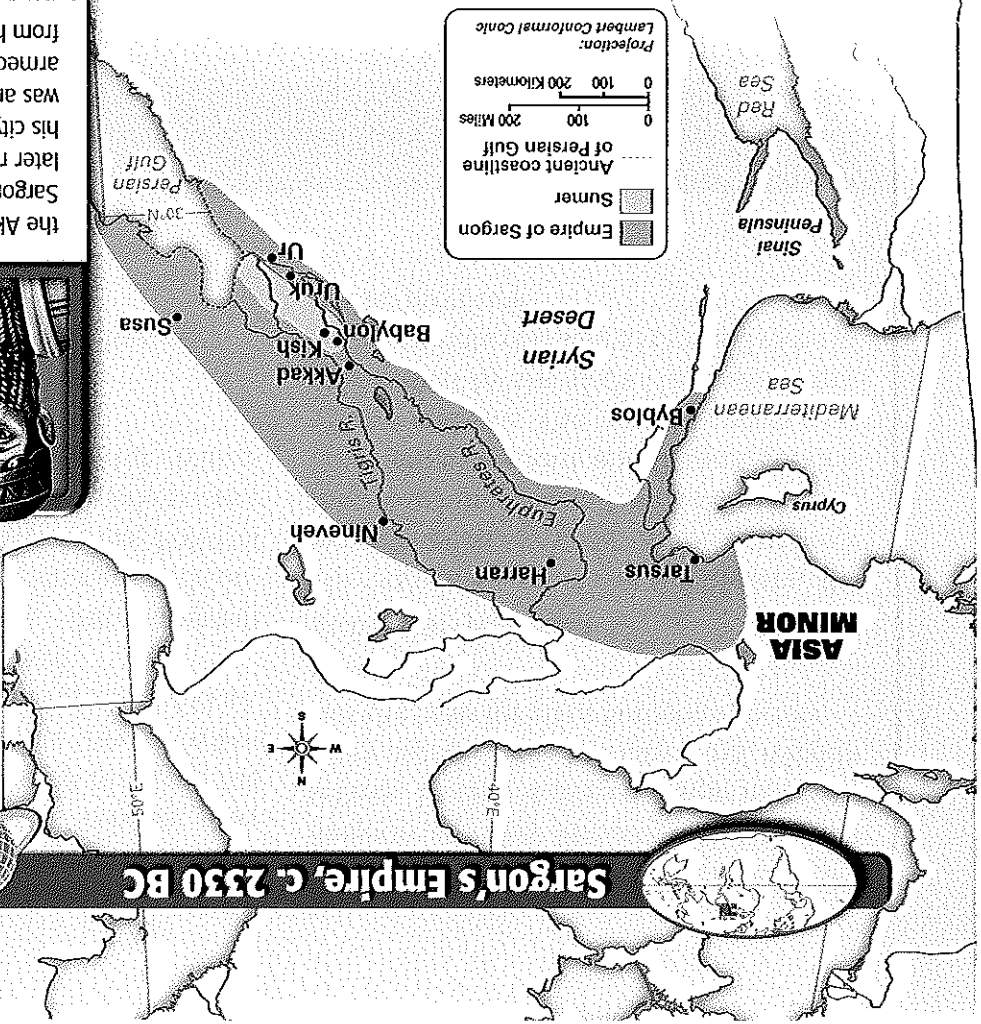


**Sargon**  
(Ruled 2334–2279 BC)

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

- Geography Skills**
1. Use the Map How far west did Sargon's empire stretch?
  2. Draw Conclusions Why might Sargon have wanted to rule a large area?

**Sargon's Empire, c. 2330 BC**



**map ZONE**

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.

**READING CHECK**

Summarizing How did Sargon build an empire?

**Sumerian Religion**

Religion was very important in Sumerian society. In fact, it played a role in nearly every aspect of life. In many ways, religion was the basis for all of Sumerian society. The Sumerians practiced **polytheism**, the worship of many gods. Among the gods they worshipped were Enlil, lord of the air; Enki, god of wisdom; and Inanna, goddess of love and war. The sun and moon were represented by the gods Utu and Nanna. Each city-state considered one god to be its special protector.

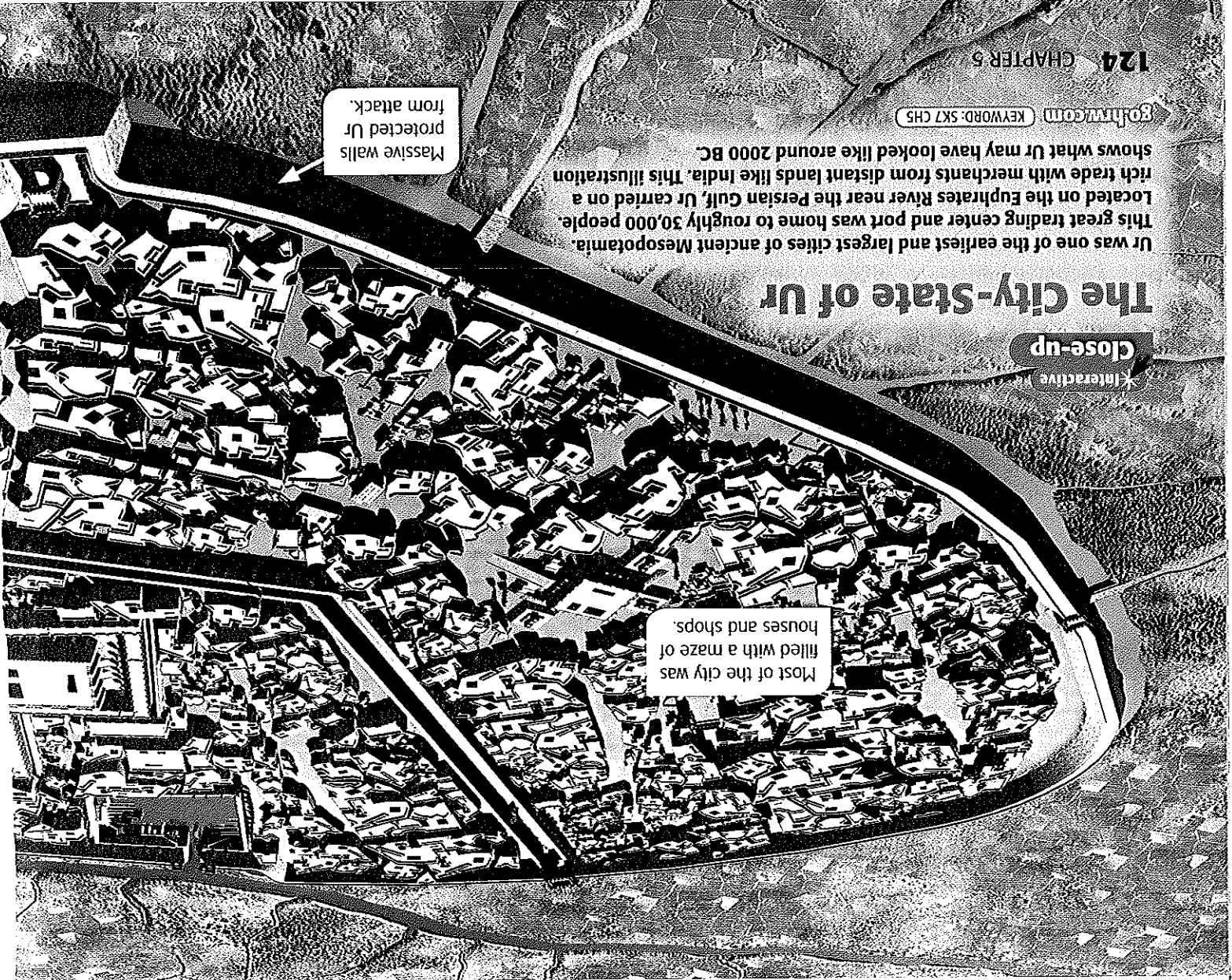
**Religion Shapes Society**

goHwz.com KEYWORD: SK7 CH5

Ur was one of the earliest and largest cities of ancient Mesopotamia. This great trading center and port was home to roughly 30,000 people. Located on the Euphrates River near the Persian Gulf, Ur carried on a rich trade with merchants from distant lands like India. This illustration shows what Ur may have looked like around 2000 BC.

**The City-State of Ur**

close-up  
Interactive

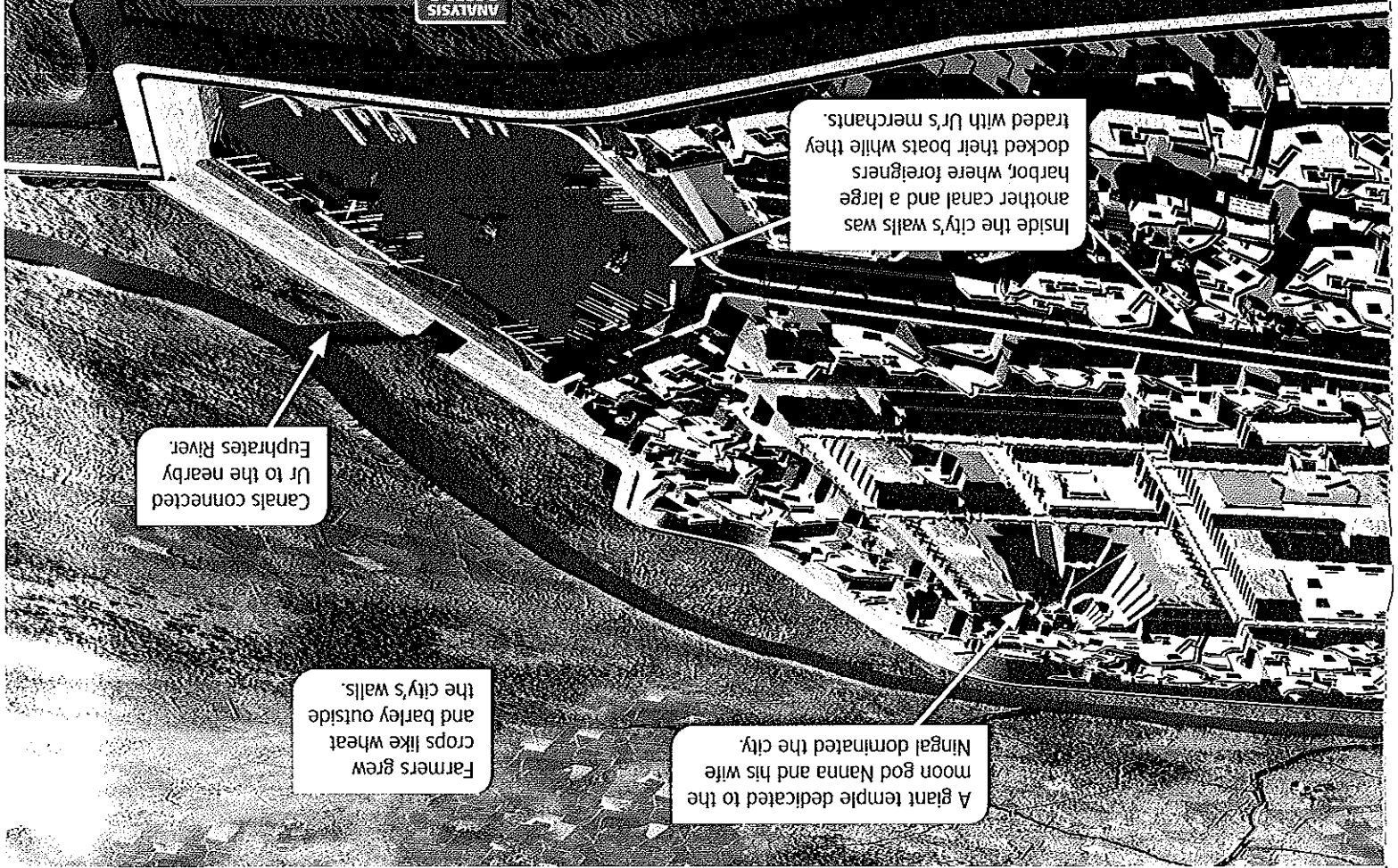


Massive walls protected Ur from attack.

Most of the city was filled with a maze of houses and shops.

What can you see in this illustration that shows Ur was an advanced city?

ANALYZING VISUALS SKILL



Inside the city's walls was another canal and a large harbor, where foreigners docked their boats while they traded with Ur's merchants.

Canals connected Ur to the nearby Euphrates River.

Farmers grew crops like wheat and barley outside the city's walls.

A giant temple dedicated to the moon god Nanna and his wife Ningal dominated the city.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

impact effect, result

**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 kings 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.

The Sumerians believed that their gods had enormous powers. Gods could bring good harvests or disastrous floods. They could bring illness, or they could bring good health and wealth. The Sumerians believed that success in life depended on pleasing the gods. Every Sumerian had to serve and worship the gods.

**Priests**, people who performed or led 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.

**Sumerian Society**  
 Sumerian society was divided into different groups. This ancient artifact shows Sumerian leaders celebrating a military victory while a musician plays an instrument.

1. a. Recall What was the basic political unit of Sumer?  
 b. Explain What steps did Sumerian city-states take to protect themselves from their rivals?  
 c. Elaborate How do you think that Sargon's creation of an empire changed the later 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 would rulers benefit if they claimed to be chosen by the gods?

**Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places**

**Section 2 Assessment**

**Critical Thinking**

3. Summarizing In the right column of your note-taking chart, write a summary sentence for each of the four characteristics. Then add a box at the bottom of the chart and write a sentence summarizing the Sumerian civilization.

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Notes             | Characteristics |
| Cities            | Government      |
| Religion          | Society         |
| Summary Sentence: |                 |

4. Gathering Information about Sumer You will need some pictures of Sumerian society on your poster. Note two or three things to add.

**FOCUS ON WRITING**

at the bottom of the chart and write a sentence summarizing the Sumerian civilization.

Summary Sentence:

Society  
 Religion  
 Government  
 Cities

Notes

KEYWORD: SK7 HP5

go.hrw.com  
 Online Quiz

**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. They helped shape Sumerian culture. One, Enheduanna, the daughter of Sargon, wrote hymns to the goddess Inanna. The first known female writer in history, she wrote these verses:

“My Queen,  
 [all] the Anuna, the great gods,  
 fled before you like fluttering bats,  
 Could not stand before your awesome face.”  
 —Enheduanna, from *Adoration of Inanna of Ur*

**READING CHECK** Analyzing How did trade affect Sumerian society?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** In this section you learned about Sumerian city-states, religion, and society. In Section 3, you will read about Sumerian achievements.