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Chapter 3, Lesson 1

Geography of Mesopotamia

TERMS AND NAMES

Terms	Definition	Importance
Mesopotamia	The region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers	Geography Theme—civilizations arise in geographic locations that help the development of agriculture and /or trade
floodplain	That flat land bordering a river	Rich soil was spread farther as silt from the river traveled in water
silt	Fine soil deposited by rivers	This soil made it possible to grow so many different crops well
semiarid	Region having little rainfall and warm temperatures	Type of geography or region affects the ability of humans to survive in a particular place
drought	Period without enough rain or snow fall	Lack of rain can affect the growth of crops and how much people can eat in a year
surplus	An amount of a good (such as food) that is in excess (extra) from what is needed	Surpluses allow for less intensity in farming, more people can eat and remain healthy, more diverse skills

MAIN IDEAS

1. How did the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers support agriculture?

The rivers flood each year and deposit rich fertile soil on the surrounding land. The rivers also provided water for crops.

2. How did the climate of Mesopotamia likely affect early farmers' decisions about where to settle and build farming villages?

If farmers were close to the rivers, they had the risk of the crops being destroyed by floods, but if they lived too far from the river, they did not have enough water and their crops would die/wilt.

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3. What made Mesopotamia a good region for farming?

The climate provided for a dry environment, but the floodplains allowed for rich soil to be deposited along the rivers and crops could grow well.

4. How did climate affect farmers?

The yearly flood was unpredictable, making it hard to know when to plant. Sometimes the flood waters washed everything away. Other times, the flood did not come and the drought caused crops to die before a harvest.

5. How did Mesopotamians water their crops during droughts?

Mesopotamians used an irrigation system of canals to water their crops. See page 84 for a diagram

6. Look at the diagram on p. 84, why do you think the canals became smaller as they reached individual fields?

The smaller canals could bring a small amount of water to each field without flooding it and destroying crops.

7. How did Mesopotamians cope with a lack of resources?

They used mud to build houses and defensive walls. They traded surplus grain for stone, wood, and metals from other regions.

8. What factor made Mesopotamians cope with a lack of resources?

There were no forests, etc so Mesopotamians had to trade in order to survive without resources nearby.

9. What factor made Mesopotamia subject to attack from outside invaders?

Mesopotamia was easy to invade had few mountains or other natural barriers that could keep others out.

10. Why was trade important in Mesopotamia?

Mesopotamians had to trade surplus grain for things they didn't have in their own land, such as wood, metal, and stone.

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NOTE TAKING SKILL

Summarizing: Write a sentence or two summarizing each of the main sections

Geography of Mesopotamia
The rivers of Mesopotamia were important because...they provided water for farmers and a means of travel.
Mesopotamians watered their crops by...building canals to water to their fields.
Due to a lack of resources, Mesopotamians...they traded with people from distant lands.

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Chapter 3, Lesson 2

The First Civilizations

TERMS AND NAMES

Terms	Definition	Importance
civilizations	advanced form of culture	e.g. Sumer
Sumer	name of the first civilization	Arose around 3300 BC
city state	Community that included city and nearby farmlands	Center of trade, learning and religion
ziggurat	Largest building in city state, temple	Largest and most important structure
polytheism	Belief in many god and goddesses	4 main Gods ruled the world,

MAIN IDEAS

1. How did civilization develop in the region of Sumer?

The rise of agriculture enabled people to settle in villages. Eventually, the villages grew larger and became cities. Over time, the society and culture in cities grew more complex. These changes led to an advanced form of culture known as civilization.

2. Why are civilizations considered “advanced” and “complex”?

They have advanced cities, specialized workers, complex institutions (religion and government), record keeping (counting sticks and system of writing), and advanced technology (canals or new tools).

3. Look at the chart on p. 90, what examples of advanced technology are included in the table shown?

Irrigation and bronze tools are advanced technology

4. Why was Sumer a good example of civilization?

Yes, because it had large cities with specialized workers, complex institutions, record keeping and advanced technology.

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5. What new type of community developed in Sumer?

Sumer developed a type of community called the city-state, which is a city and its nearby farmlands.

6. Where were most of the Sumerian city-states located and why?

Most of the 12 city-states of Sumer were located by the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Reasons were fertile land and water access.

7. What can you infer about the role of religion in Sumer from the fact that the ziggurat was the center of city life?

Things at the center of a city are usually the most important, so you can infer that religion was very important and powerful in Sumer.

8. How did the leadership of Sumer change?

In early Sumer, priests were the leaders. As the city states became wealthier, they came under attack.

Powerful men who could protect the city-states became kings.

9. What did Sumerians see as their responsibilities to the gods?

People believed they were required to work (like a servant for a master), pray (for rain/crops), and make sacrifices (of animals) to their gods.

10. Why could the job of being king in Sumer be considered an example of specialization?

Kings had to specialize in ruling over a complicated system of social classes. They had to know how to defend a city with an army, maintaining canals, managing surplus grains, and acted as judges. The specializing in many jobs all at once is unique and a class all its own.

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NOTE TAKING SKILL

Making Generalizations: Make judgements based on a set of facts or information

Civilization in Sumer	
Advanced Cities	Babylon, Ur, Uruk, and Hit
Specialized Workers	Preist, artisan
Complex Institutions	The temple, ziggurat, government
Record Keeping	Writing
Advanced Technology	Bronze tools

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Chapter 3, Lesson 3

Life in Sumer

TERMS AND NAMES

Terms	Definition	Importance
bronze	mixture of copper and tin	Stronger than copper so made tools last longer
pictographs	picture writing	Used to keep track of goods
stylus	Sharpened reed used to press markings into clay	Writing tool
cuneiform	Wedge-shaped writing	First system of writing
scribes	Specialists in writing	Professional record keepers

MAIN IDEAS

1. What were the social classes that made up Sumerian society?

Upper class – kings, priests, landowners, officials, merchants

In between class – free people, farmers and artisans

Lowest class - slaves

2. What is the effect of a class system on a society?

Defined who usually has power and who usually does the less desirable jobs

3. Which class in Sumerian society made it possible to get the least desirable jobs done?

Slaves – source of cheap labor

4. Why were kings and priests in the highest class?

Sumerians believed they had a link to the gods, so they had great influence over people

5. What tools did the Sumerians invent?

The plow, the wheel, the potter's wheel

6. What are two ways Sumerians used wheels?

On wagons to transport goods, potter's wheel to make pottery faster

7. How have Sumerians' development in mathematics affected the world?

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The way we count time is based on their number system based on number 60, calendar, understood geometric shapes which they used to make bricks, build ramps and dig canals.

8. How did new tools make life better for the Sumerians?

Plow made planting easier, wheel helped people transport things faster, potterer's wheel helped made pottery making faster, bronze tools lasted longer and stayed sharper

9. How did the Sumerians invent writing?

They began using symbols called pictographs to keep track of trade goods. In time, these symbols began to stand for ideas as well as objects, later they began to use symbols made of wedges and lines and created a system called cuneiform

10. What were two ways mentioned in which cuneiform was used?

Used to write records and for literature such as proverbs

11. Why are proverbs sometimes difficult to understand?

Because every culture is different

12. Why were scribes highly respected in Sumer?

They were the professional record keepers and specialized in writing

NOTE TAKING SKILL:

Categorizing:

Life in Sumer		
Society	Technology	Writing
Unequal classes	Plow and wheel	pictograph
slaves	bronze	cuneiform
Women belonged to all classes	mathematics	