

ANCIENT
CIVILIZATIONS

ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA



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A SACRED HONOR



CUNEIFORM IN STONE

A Sumerian girl yawns as she studies her clay tablet. Her school day began at sunrise. The girl will practice **cuneiform** all day. She needs to read and write well to become a good priestess.



CITY OF UR

The girl feels lucky to be in school. Most Sumerian students are boys. But she is training to serve the grain goddess Ashnan. She hopes to one day heal people, too. Many priestesses are also doctors or dentists. Becoming a priestess will bring the girl's family great honor in ancient Mesopotamia!

WHO WERE THE ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIANS?



KEY

Fertile Crescent



THINK ABOUT IT

How do you think the Fertile Crescent got its name?

Ancient Mesopotamia was home to some of the world's earliest civilizations. Its name comes from a Greek word for "land between two rivers." The region was based between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the **Fertile Crescent**. Modern-day Iraq and Syria cover most of the area today.

Ancient Mesopotamian civilization lasted from around 4500 to 539 BCE. Several groups rose and fell during these thousands of years. The Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians were the most powerful.



TIGRIS RIVER

Mesopotamian civilization relied on the surrounding rivers. A mix of **irrigation** and natural flooding made the soil rich for agriculture. A steady food supply helped early Mesopotamians develop the world's first cities.

Mesopotamia's location also helped civilizations grow. It was connected to Egypt, Europe, and India. Mesopotamians traded with these regions for wood, metal, and stone. Mesopotamia's rivers also helped its people control trade routes. This helped build wealth and power.



MESOPOTAMIAN
IRRIGATION

EUPHRATES RIVER

