

## I. Land Between Two Rivers

- a. Scribes: professional writers
- b. Scribes are important to the kings and priests for record keeping

### A. The Geographic Setting

- a. Sumer is located in the Mesopotamia region
- b. Mesopotamia has rich soil and life giving water (2 rivers)

#### 1. The Location of Mesopotamia

- a. Mesopotamia means “between the rivers”
- b. The two rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates
- c. Mesopotamia is located in the Fertile Crescent (a region in Southwest Asia that was the site of the world’s first civilization)

#### 2. Rivers of Life and Death

- a. Melting snow picked up topsoil and flooded fields leaving the topsoil that the people used for growing
- b. Flooding was sudden and unexpected and would kill people and animals

### B. The First Cities

- a. Surplus of food encouraged growth of cities

#### 1. Independent Cities Form

- a. Sharing common culture and language cities in Sumer did not unite
- b. City-state is a city that is also a separate, independent state.

#### 2. A Brief Tour of a Sumerian City

- a. Public squares are busy with merchants and entertainers
- b. Houses did not face the busy streets, on hot nights they could sleep on their flat roofs

### B. Sumerian Religion

#### 1. Sumerian Temples

- a. Ziggurat are temples, and it was believed the god would use it as a ladder and climb down from the heavens to earth using the Ziggurat

#### 2. Ancient Religious Beliefs

- a. Sumer practiced polytheism
- b. Poly theism is belief in many gods/ “Poly” is many and theism means “belief in god/gods
- c. Myths are stories about the gods that explain people’s beliefs.

#### 3. Honoring the Gods

- a. Sumerians honored their gods in religious ceremonies
- b. Sumerian religious beliefs give an idea of what was important to them

4. The Fall of Sumer
  - a. Use of water and land weakened Sumer
  - b. King Sargon united the Sumerian city-states
  - c. It remained united for 100 years until it dissolved once more into independent city-states