

I. Land Between Two Rivers

- a. Scribes are professional writers
- b. Scribes were important for kings and priests for record keeping

A. The Geographic Setting

- a. Sumer is located on the region known as Mesopotamia
- b. This region has rich soil and life-giving rivers

1. The Location of Mesopotamia

- a. Mesopotamia means “between the rivers” and is between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- b. It is part of the Fertile Crescent
- c.

2. Rivers of Life and Death

- a. Snow melting picked up topsoil from the mts. and flooded the land leaving behind the fertile topsoil
- b. The floods sometimes wipe away people, houses, and crops

B. The First Cities

- a. Food surpluses encouraged the growth of cities.

1. Independent Cities Form

- a. Sumer shares common language and culture but they were not united
- b. City-state is a city that is also a separate independent state

2. A Brief Tour of a Sumerian City

- a. Squares were busy with merchants and entertainers
- b. Sumerian houses faced away from crowded streets and on hot nights would sleep on their flat roofs

B. Sumerian Religion

1. Sumerian Temples

- a. Ziggurat are religious temples that the people believed was a ladder that the gods used to climb to earth

2. Ancient Religious Beliefs

- a. Sumerians practiced polytheism
- b. Poly means many and theism means belief in god or goddess
- c. Myths are stories about gods that explain people’s beliefs

3. Honoring the Gods

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

4. The Fall of Sumer

- a. Sumerian cities fought over use of water and land which weakened them
- b. King Sargon united Sumer
- c. It was united for 100 years until it dissolved into independent city-states