

## LESSON 3 - Mesopotamia

\* River Valleys - places people settled due to

- 1 fertile soil
- 2 protection
- 3 moderate climate
- 4 presence of animals
- 5 ease of transportation

One of the first places was in the Tigris-Euphrates river valley. What present day country is this? Iraq

Fertile Crescent - the land between the rivers was fertile for farming and many people desired to settle there  
- It was also close to the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf

\* Why was it so important to control the rivers in this area? flooding was very unpredictable and destructive  
- They used irrigation and drainage ditches to help (aided farming also)

Mesopotamia "The Land Between the Rivers" (Greek word) Included: Assyria, Akkad, Sumer  
This was not a unified country like we have today, instead they formed smaller units

\* city-states Each city had its own government and were separate from the other cities  
- The cities had walls and included the areas around the city also  
- Main building material: Mud - most common due to lack of stone or wood in the area

polytheistic People look to religion to answer nature's & life's questions  
- Believed in many gods, not just one  
- Humans were believed to be lesser than the gods

ziggurat massive pyramid-like temples often built on towers - used to worship gods

\* How do the features and location of the ziggurats indicate their role of value?  
most prominent building on high ground - center of the city - people devoted time and wealth to  
build them and to support the priests/gods

\* theocracy a government established by divine authority and ruled by religious leaders

cuneiform form of writing in this area - used a wedge-shaped instrument to make marks in certain shapes on  
a wet clay tablet. It dried to form a permanent record.  
- Possibly the greatest contribution, but there were other...see below ↓↓

Why were the scribes considered so important? Not everyone could write >>> Scribes  
became leaders and held important positions as teachers and jurists

\* Other Sumerian contributions: wheel, sundial, bronze, astronomy (charted heavenly constellations)  
Because of their central location, many of these ideas spread to other areas

The Epic of Gilgamesh -

of the earliest examples of literature - it came from this area during this time