History
Volume I
Ancient Mesopotamia

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Contributing Author: Dennis Ward

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Mesopotamia

Overview

Several Early Civilizations developed in Mesopotamia simultaneously with Egypt. The early civilizations developed at different paces and times in many areas of the world. During this unit you will look at the Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian civilizations of Mesopotamia. You'll also look at Persia. (Persia isn't in Mesopotamia; however, the Persian Empire dominated Mesopotamia from 612-330 B.C.)

Mesopotamia, the country between the two rivers, is the name given by the Greeks and Romans to the region between the Euphrates and the Tigris (Genesis 24:10; Deuteronomy 23:4; Judges 3:8, 10). In the Old Testament it is mentioned also under the name "Padan-aram," i.e., the plain of Aram, or Syria (Genesis 25:20). The northern portion of this fertile plateau was the original home of the ancestors of the Hebrews (Gen. 11; Acts 7:2). From this region Isaac obtained his wife Rebecca (Gen. 24:10, 15), and here also Jacob sojourned (28:2-7) and obtained his wives, and here most of his sons were born (35:26; 46:15). Abraham led the Hebrews from Mesopotamia to Canaan.

Mesopotamia was the birthplace of the varied civilizations that developed writing, schools, libraries, and written law codes. The Sumerians, Akkadians, Chaldeans, Hittites, Babylonians, Israelites, Phoenicians, Lydians, Assyrians, and Persians established the foundations for future civilizations. Their contributions included: the wheel, glass, the sail, coinage, mathematics, calendars, bronze, iron, monotheism, epic poetry, farming, and irrigation.
The civilizations that developed between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are now Iraq and Kuwait. In the middle of Iraq lie the ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's Hanging Gardens of Babylon (Babel), close to the place where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego sang their hymn of praise in the midst of the fiery furnace. Here the biblical Daniel read for Nebuchadnezzar the mysterious Aramaic handwriting "mene tekel peres" (counted, weighed, divided), written on the wall in the Aramaic or Chaldean language. This is also where, under the later rule of Darius, Daniel sat unharmed in the lions' den.

**Peoples**

- The Akkadians
- The Amorites
- The Hittites
- The Kassites
- The Assyrians
- The Chaldeans

**Resources**

The easiest way to use this unit is to have one or more of the four books below. You'll be referring to specific readings in these books in almost every lesson.

- [Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World](#)
- [Kingfisher History Encyclopedia](#)
- [Ancient Civilizations](#)
- [Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery](#)
- [See the Resources for the Mesopotamia Unit for more suggestions.](#)
Objectives

- Appreciate the importance of agriculture in early civilizations.
- Tell the historic origin of various crops.
- Describe the state of agriculture before the age of metals.
- Understand the effects of widespread agriculture in early history.
- Explain the process by which the first civilization was created.
- Describe life in the early Sumerian city-states.
- Discuss the economy, society, and polity of ancient Mesopotamia.
- Evaluate the technological and intellectual achievements of the Sumerians.
- Understand the importance of laws.
- Recall the story of the Tower of Babel and explain its effect on today's world.
- Understand the location and importance of the Fertile Crescent.
- Understand the importance of Writing.
- Understand the influence of environment upon religious development.
- Understand the influence of environment upon religious architecture.
- Understand the views of the after-life.
- Understand the origins and development of city-states.
- Understand the evolution of executive government.
- Understand the development of an empire on the Assyrian Model.
- Understand the creation of the world's first recognized Law Code (Hammurabi).
- Recognize the river system of the Tigris-Euphrates and its influence upon survival.
- Understand the evolution and use of cuneiform writing.
- Understand the origins of western literature through various sources (Book of Job, Flood Story).
- Understand the advances in the technology of warfare by the Assyrians.
Mesopotamia Unit

Bible References

Mesopotamia

- Abraham a native of Mesopotamia - Acts 7:2
- Nahor lived in Mesopotamia - Genesis 24:10
- People who lived in Mesopotamia (called Syrians) - Genesis 25:20
- Balaam from Mesopotamia - Deuteronomy 23:4
- The people of Israel subjected to and eight years under the judgments of Gog - Judges 3:8
- Delivered from, by Othniel - Judges 3:9,10
- Chariots hired from Mesopotamia by the Ammonites - 1 Chronicles 19:6,7
- People of Mesopotamia present at Pentecost - Acts 2:9

Babylon

Empire of Babylon

- Founded by Nimrod - Genesis 10:10
- Called Land of Shinar - Genesis 10:10; 11:2; 14:1,9; Isaiah 11:11; Daniel 1:2; Zechariah 5:11
- Divisions of Babylon Empire - 2 Kings 17:24; 24:7; Isaiah 23:12,13; Daniel 3:1; Acts 7:4
- Extent of, at the time of Nebuchadnezzar - Daniel 2:37,38; 4:1; 6:1
- At the time of Ahasuerus - Esther 1:1; 8:9; 9:30
- Babylon armies invade ancient Canaan - Genesis 14
- . . . Samaria - 2 Kings 17:5-24
- . . . Judah - 2 Kings 24:1-16
- Jews carried to Babylon - 2 Kings 25; 1 Chronicles 9:1; 2 Chronicles 33:11; 36:17-21; Jeremiah 32:2; 39; 52
- Colonists from Babylon sent to Samaria - Ezra 4:9,10; 2 Kings 17:29-32
- Conquest of Egypt by Babylon - 2 Kings 24:7
• Prophecies of conquests by Babylon - 2 Kings 20:16-19; Jeremiah 20:4-7; 21; 22; 25:1-11; 27; 28; 29; 32:28; 29; 34; 36:29; 38:17, 18; 43:8-13; 46:13-26; Ezekiel 12; 17; 19; 21; 24; 26; 29:18-20; 30; 32
• Prophetic denunciations against - Psalms 137:8, 9; Isaiah 13; 14:21; 43:14-17; 47; Jeremiah 50; 51
• A limited monarchy - Esther 1:13-19; 8:8; Daniel 6:8, 14, 17
• Tyrannical - Esther 3:7-15; Daniel 3

City of Babylon
• Built by Nimrod - Genesis 10:10
• In the land of Shinar - Genesis 10:10; 11:2
• Tower of Babal - Genesis 11:1-9
• Capital of the kingdom of Babylon - Daniel 4:30; 2 Kings 25:13; 2 Chronicles 36:6, 7, 10, 18, 20
• Gates of Babylon - Isaiah 45:1, 2; Jeremiah 51:58
• Walled Babylon - Jeremiah 51:44, 58
• Splendor of Babylon - Isaiah 14:4
• Peter writes from Babylon - 1 Peter 5:13

Assyria
• An empire founded by Nimrod in Assyria - Genesis 10:8-12; Micah 5:6
• Assyria extended from east of the Tigris - Genesis 2:14; 10:11
• Assyria's armies invade the land of Israel under Pul - 2 Kings 15:19; 1 Chronicles 5:26
• Tiglath in Assyria - 2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chronicles 5:6, 26
• Shalmaneser in Assyria - 2 Kings 17:3-6, 24-27; 18:9-12; Jeremiah 50:17
• Sennacherib in Assyria - 2 Kings 18:13-37; 19; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36; 37
• Army of Assyria destroyed by the angel of the Lord - Isaiah 37:36
- Alliances with Assyria sought by Judah and Israel - Hosea 5:13
- Israelites subject to Assyria - Lamentations 5:6
- Israelites carried captive into Assyria - 2 Kings 17:3-23
- Jews carried captive to Assyria - 2 Kings 24; 25; 2 Chronicles 36:5-21
- Invaded by Pharaoh-necho - 2 Kings 23:29
- Commerce of Assyria - Ezekiel 27:23
- Productiveness of Assyria - Isaiah 36:17
- Prophecies of captivity of Israelites in Assyria - Hosea 9:3; 11:5, 11
**Ancient Mesopotamia Timeline**

- ?-5000 Early Farming Communities
- 5000-3500 Pre-Sumerians
- 3500-1900 Sumerians
- 1900-300 Babylonians, Assyrians, Hebrews

**Approximate Dates (rounded off)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sumerians 3500-1900</th>
<th>Bible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seth is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3500</td>
<td>Sumerians settle on banks of Euphrates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000</td>
<td>Democratic assemblies give way to kingships, evolve into hereditary monarchies.</td>
<td>Noah is born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2750</td>
<td>Kish - leading Sumerian city</td>
<td>Shem, Ham, and Japheth are born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gilgamesh, hero of Sumerian legends, reigns as king of Erech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2500</td>
<td>Lugalannemudu of Abab unites city states which vie for domination for 200 years.</td>
<td>Methuselah dies at age 969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Abram born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2250</td>
<td>Ur-Nammu founds Ur's 3rd. dynasty; dedicates ziggurat at Ur moon-god Nanna, sets up early law code.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Elamites attack and destroy Ur.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Amorites from Syrian desert conquer Sumer.</td>
<td>Abram and Sarai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Hammurabi ascends Babylonian throne.</td>
<td>Joseph in Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>Hammurabi brings most of Mesopotamia under his control.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td>Hittite invasion from Turkey ends Hammurabi's dynasty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Assyria conquered by Hurrians from Anatolia.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400</td>
<td>Kurigalzu assumes Babylonian throne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>Nebuchadrezzar I expels Elamites.</td>
<td>Moses, the Exodus wilderness Joshua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100</td>
<td>King Tiglath-Pileser I leads Assyria to new era of power.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Assyrian empire shattered by Aramaean and Zagros tribes. 150 Assyrian decline halted by Adadnirari II.</td>
<td>Saul David Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>960</td>
<td></td>
<td>King Solomon (David's son) builds the First Temple on site chosen by his father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>Tiglath-Pileser II creates great empire extending from the Persian Gulf to the borders of Egypt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>Senacherib, King of Assyria, unsuccessfully lays siege to Jerusalem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>Assurbanipal extends empire from Nile to Caucasus Mountains. Chaldeans and Iranian Medes overrun Assyria - Neo-Babylonian empire.</td>
<td>Hezekiah develops water supply at Siloam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>Kingdom of Judah eventually falls to Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who captures and destroys Jerusalem, including the First Temple, and exiles Jews to Babylon.</td>
<td>Beginning of return from Exile in Babylon--led by Ezra and Nehemia. City restored, and dedication of Second Temple (during reign of Darius).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Cyrus the Great, Persian warrior and statesman, conquers Babylon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>Nehemia rebuilds Jerusalem and its walls</td>
<td>Persians capture Jerusalem. Hellenistic domination of region-- Alexander the Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ptolemy I of Egypt rules Jerusalem.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Mesopotamia Unit

### Vocabulary

See [Vocabulary Instructions](#) in the Teacher’s Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal Zones</td>
<td>Irrigate</td>
<td>Sargon I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Of Civilization</td>
<td>Ishtar</td>
<td>Sargonii</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edubba</td>
<td>Mesoamerica</td>
<td>Scribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire</td>
<td>Mesopotamia</td>
<td>Semitic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertile Crescent</td>
<td>Neolithic Revolution</td>
<td>Stela Of The Vultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherfolk</td>
<td>Nomad</td>
<td>Sumerians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilgamesh</td>
<td>Pastoralism</td>
<td>Swidden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter-Gatherer</td>
<td>Priest-King</td>
<td>Terrace Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydraulic Society</td>
<td>Raised Field Farming</td>
<td>Ziggurat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources

- Books
- TV/Videos
- Internet Sites
- Maps
- Magazines
- Works Cited

Books

Resources for the Mesopotamia Unit

*Ancient Civilizations* (Exploring History) by Philip Brooks

Beginning with the dawn of civilization, this ambitious new book tackles all aspects of civilized life, from settlement, agriculture and trade to crafts, language and transportation. Sections on Sumer, Babylon, the Hittites, Assyria, the Persian Empire, the Parthians and Sassanians, the Islamic Empire on through to the civilizations of the Andes, the Olmec and the Maya, create a real sense of history for young readers, who will be captivated by the vividly told stories and fascinating factual information. Reading level: Ages 9-12. Hardcover - 64 pages 1 Ed. edition (October 1, 1999) Lorenz Books; ISBN: 0754802116. Reading in this book are recommended in several units in History Volume I.

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*Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent* (Looking Back) by Mavis Pilbeam, John Malam

Focusing on particular periods in four areas of the world, these titles provide broad introductions to each region. Clear expository text briefly addresses many aspects of the lives of each region's diverse inhabitants, including government, laws, food, science and technology, arts and crafts, religion, and the impact of war on everyday life. Maps and attractive color photos appear in each volume. Reading level: Young Adult. Library Binding - 64 pages (October 1999) Raintree/Steck Vaughn; ISBN: 081725434X.
First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People) by Erica C.D., Ph.D. Hunter, Gillian Evans (Editor)

Review: "...factually precise, straightforward, and inclusive... A concise, challenging, and useful resource." - School Library Journal

This volume focuses on the earliest civilizations of Mesopotamia and the ancient Near East, beginning with the region's earliest nomads, following the growth of warring city states and empires, and culminating with Darius's mighty Persian Empire and its destruction by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. 220 full-color illustrations and maps. Index. Glossary. Gazetteer. 96 Pages. 1994 • ISBN: 0816029768. Specific readings in this book are recommended to in several lessons in History Volume I.

Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery

A comprehensive overview of history from a Christian perspective. Extensive vocabulary questions and suggested projects are listed throughout the text. Contains beautiful illustrations and numerous high-quality, two-color maps. Vol. One covers history from Creation to the 1620's. Answer Key and Test Packets can be purchased separately. The Timeline provides students with an excellent overview of the key personalities who have shaped history from ancient times to the present. Grade level: 9-10. From Christian Liberty. ASIN: 0890510172. Order from The Homeschool

Usborne First Civilizations

A brilliant illustrated colorful overview of world history from prehistoric times to the early 20th century. Prepared with the help of experts in each period, each book has lots of illustrations to provide an attractive and stimulating starting point to each subject. Assumes evolution. (June 1978) EDC Publications; ISBN: 0860201384 Reading Level Ages 8 - 12. Interest level 8 to 16.

Bible History: Old Testament by Alfred Edersheim

Grasping "the big picture" of God's story in the Old Testament helps readers understand the finer points of theology. And it is this "grasp of the big picture" that Alfred Edersheim offers in an unparalleled way. Since its original appearance in 1890, this work has encountered many rivals but no successors, and its relevance for the Christian faith has only been reinforced during the intervening decades. Hendrickson Publishers' unique, newly typeset edition of the complete and unabridged work will be a milestone contribution to the libraries of believers. Hardcover Updated edition (September 1995) Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; ISBN: 156563165X. Click for online access to all seven volumes of this book.
Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East by Michael Roaf


Mesopotamia: The Mighty Kings (The Lost Civilizations Collections) by Time Life

Explores the great empires that flourished during the first and second centuries BC in Mesopotamia. Includes the rise of Babylonia in the south, Assyria in the north, and the renaissance of Babylon before it fell to the Persians in 539 BC.

Sumer and the Sumerians by Harriet Crawford

This is an illustrated synthesis of recent and archaeological historical research. 182 pages (April 1991) Cambridge Univ Pr (Pap Txt); ISBN: 0521388503.

Ancient Inventions by Peter James & Nick Thorpe

Few people know that brain surgery was performed in the Stone Age; a form of computer was used by the ancient Greeks; the Roman Empire had plumbing. Written with the pure joy of discovery, brimming with odd facts and entertaining curiosities, Ancient Inventions is a dazzling celebration of inventiveness. Illustrated with more than 300 line drawings. Paperback (November 1995) Ballantine Books (Trd Pap); ISBN: 0345401026.
The Ancient Near East: The Origins of Civilization by Annie Caubet, Patrick Pouyssegur


Mesopotamia (Cultures of the Past, Group 4) by Pamela F. Service

The Cultures of the Past series is hallmarked by very good writing, colorful graphics, well-chosen pictures, and excellent design work, showing what can be done within the confines of the series format. In these two volumes, the authors not only provide a survey of the ancient cultures but also put them within a historical context. These tightly focused books provide historical overviews of each ancient society and discuss their religious beliefs and cultural achievements. Excerpts from sacred books, charts comparing the childhood experiences for boys and girls living in those eras, and plentiful color reproductions enhance reader interest. Each volume concludes with a chapter exploring the enduring legacies of the cultures. Reading level: Ages 9-12. Library Binding - 80 pages (October 1998) Marshall Cavendish Corp.; ISBN: 0761403019.

Science in Ancient Mesopotamia (Science of the Past) by Carol Moss

Ancient Mesopotamia (1998)

Where did civilization begin? That's a question archeologists have been trying to answer for centuries. Many believe it began in ancient Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Asia, in what is now part of Turkey and Iraq. This program examines the Sumerian civilization in detail and takes students to the ancient lands of the Babylonians and the Assyrians to learn of their lives and customs, much of which we have learned from the Bible. Hosted by the intriguing archeologist Arizona Smith and his young detective-in-training, the program includes a teacher's guide featuring additional information on the topic, vocabulary words, discussion questions, follow-up activities and lists of recommended books and Internet resources. TSC ASIN: 1572251425

Lost Civilizations Collection: Mesopotamia: Return to Eden

The great world traditions of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths all trace the roots of their civilizations to the river valleys of Mesopotamia's Fertile Crescent. And it is here, amid the arid, wind-swept deserts of modern Iraq and the Arabian Gulf states, that one must search for what may have been the greatest jewel in all the territories of the once-mighty, ancient Mesopotamian empires: the mythic site of Heaven on Earth, the Garden of Eden. Join archaeologists unearthing physical clues to the truth behind the Biblical stories of Noah and his Ark, the Great Flood, the Tower of Babel and more. Embark on an extraordinary, thought-provoking "Return to Eden," as you descend through time, layer by layer, from the Jewish Exodus into Babylon to the barbaric reign of the fearsome Assyrians to the dawn of civilization itself amid the first cities of ancient Sumer. Witness the invention of writing, the wheel, and the concept of law. And, guided by some of the Western world's earliest written accounts, experience the often surprising, always fascinating, intersection of science and religion on this epic, 6000 year journey in search of paradise itself. Time Life Lost Civilizations Collection.
Videos

The Lost Civilizations Collection


Ancient Mesopotamia (1998)

Description: Where did civilization begin? That's a question archeologists have been trying to answer for centuries. Many believe it began in ancient Mesopotamia, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Asia, in what is now part of Turkey and Iraq. This program examines the Sumerian civilization in detail and takes students to the ancient lands of the Babylonians and the Assyrians to learn of their lives and customs, much of which we have learned from the Bible. Hosted by the intriguing archeologist Arizona Smith and his young detective-in-training, the program includes a teacher's guide featuring additional information on the topic, vocabulary words, discussion questions, follow-up activities and lists of recommended books and Internet resources. TSC ASIN: 1572251425

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National Film Board of Canada. The Dig. 1989. VHS and 16mm, 22 min., color. Available to rent from Indiana University, Audio Visual Center, Franklin Hall, Bloomington, Indiana 47405-5901. Call 1(800) 552-8260. Seventh grade teacher Richard Edwardson manufactures artifacts and archaeological sites and teaches his students excavation techniques. Archaeology magazine called this video an "impressive testimony to an impressive teacher."
Internet Sources

Chronology Of Ancient Mesopotamian History
Description: 4500 years in Mesopotamian history in broad outline.

Mesopotamia
Description: Look at a graphic timeline and read the general overview about Mesopotamia.

The History and Religion of Ancient Mesopotamia from ~3000 B.C. until the Time of Abraham (~2000 B.C.)

The Ancient Land of Mesopotamia
Description: A classroom Internet project from Too Cool for Grownups: Mysteries of the Lost Civilizations site.

Photo Gallery of Ancient Mesopotamia
Description: K.C. Hansen took these photos chronicling ancient Mesopotamian history as viewed in the collections of various museums across Europe.

Ancient Mesopotamia
Description: See the rivers near Mesopotamia and learn about a Sumerian city-state.

Mesopotamia
Description: A page from Dr. Silvestri's WWW Ancient World History Resource. The Mesopotamia page includes an excellent overview of the first civilizations in the Fertile Crescent; the rise of monarchies and empires; and Mesopotamian culture, religion, and literature.

Mesopotamia Table of Contents
Description: An index to Chapter 2 of John Heise's 'Akkadian language' with some geographical and historical background about the ancient Near East, including climate, people, divine world, prehistory, protohistory, Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Photographs of Mesopotamia

The History Channel: Mesopotamia

Biblical Archaeologist: Perspectives on the Ancient World from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean
"Ancient Mesopotamia"
**Description:** "Overview of the Region" shows the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is approximately modern Iran.

**Mesopotamia 9000-500 B.C.**
**Description:** Find out about the Sumerians and early farm communities

**NM's Creative Development of Western Civilization I, World History I**
**Description:** A collection of dozens of links to help learn about the people and history of Mesopotamia.
Maps

Mesopotamia
Description with some geographical and climatological background about the Ancient Near East, including an introduction to the people (Sumerian, Akkadians and neighbors), the divine world, economy.

Assyriology and Archeology. Ancient Mesopotamia a World History/World Geography
Description A unit of study designed to be supplementary to the traditional social studies textbook, or it can be used by teachers in order to attain important vocabulary terms, vocabulary exercises, a study guide, an example quiz, hands-on activities, and final unit evaluations.

Maps of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Middle East
Description Simple, clear overview map.

www.achilles.net/~sal/icons/ mesopotamia.gif
Description Small color map of Mesopotamia.

Magazines

Description: This excellent issue contains information and activities, all written to the level of the student, dealing with a variety of Mesopotamian topics. Especially useful for studying farming; the cities of Ur and Babylon; and the empires of Sargon the Great, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. Vol. 4, no. 1.

Works Cited


Thomas, D. Winton, 1958, Documents from Old Testament Times, Nelson, ASIN: 0061300853
Lessons

- Introduction
- Civilizations: Sumer 3500-2000
- Civilizations: Assyria 1200-700
- Civilizations: Babylon 625-536
- Civilizations: Persia 612-330
- Art
- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Archaeology
- Tower of Babel
- Cities
- Climate
- Cuneiform
- Daily Life
- Fertile Crescent
- Education
- Food
- Gender Roles
- Hanging Gardens of Babylon
- Hammurabi’ Code
- Literature
- Medicine
- Religion
- Science and Technology

Resources recommended elsewhere in this: ♦ Unit, ★ Volume, ❤ Curriculum.

Key Resource—description in Resource Section.
Introduction

Step 1 Excite

Mesopotamia had four dominant forces at different times throughout it's history:

- The Sumerians
- The Babylonians
- The Assyrians
- The Persians

All influenced the Greek and Roman civilizations that followed them.

Find out what the Bible says about learning history. Read Deuteronomy 7:17-19, Psalm 78:4-6, 2 Chronicles 20:6-13, and 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Step 2 Examine

Browse through library books and Internet sites to find out this time period Use any resource from the Resource page or encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet.

Internet Sources

**Odyssey Online: The Near East**

**Description:** Emory University This award-winning educational web aimed at middle school students explores ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures. Includes puzzles, games, and worksheets.

**ABZU: Regional Index - Mesopotamia, at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.**

**Description:** Here you will find an index of resources for the study of ancient Mesopotamia, including the area under the control of the modern state of Iraq and parts of Iran, Syria and Turkey.

**Introduction to Mesopotamia:**

**Description:** Published for the British History National Curriculum., this site was published to be a resource for primary school teachers teaching a unit on ancient Mesopotamia. Includes timeline, maps, facts and more.

**IRAQ - A Country Study**

**Description:** Based on information from George Roux, Ancient Iraq, Cleveland, 1965 from the Library of Congressd. Read the chapters: "Ancient Mesopotamia," "Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, and Assyria" and "Iranian and Greek Intrusions."
Ancient Mesopotamia

Description: This is a seventh grade World History/World Geography unit designed to be used by both students and teachers. It is designed in such a way that it can be used by students as an educational resource supplementary to the traditional social studies textbook, or it can be used by teachers in order to attain important vocabulary terms, vocabulary exercises, a study guide, an example quiz, hands-on activities, and final unit evaluations.

History of Iraq

Description: An excellent summary of the history of Iraq from CountryWatch.com.

Mesopotamia Internet sources

Step 3 Expand

As you go through the books or sites, take notes of things you would like to learn about. With your notes, make a mind map titled Early Civilizations. Use sheets of unlined paper and colored markers or pencils. Put a circle in the center and write in "Early Civilizations." Draw lines out from the center as you reflect on what you would like to find out about this time period. Branch lines from these will hold key subtopics. Continue branching until you are out of ideas. Use different colors for each cluster of information. Ask yourself: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? Use colors and patterns; symbols, numbers, and arrows; and other doodles such as a drawing of a ziggurat, clay tablets, a chariot, etc.

Step 3 Excel

Make a map of the Middle East during Abraham’s time using The Student Bible Atlas or another resource (any Bible atlas or map in your Bible) as a guide. Mark the following: Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Syria, the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, Palestine, Babylon, the Tigris, the Euphrates, Elam, Jericho, and Ur. Add to this map during your studies in this unit.
Civilizations: Sumer 3500-2000

Step 1 Excite

The Sumerian civilization is considered by historians to be the first true civilization. People gathered into cities and developed the first writing system (cuneiform). The Akkadians, Semitic people from the west, conquered Sumer around 2350 B.C., and the two cultures merged.

Step 2 Examine

Sumer (3500-2000 B.C.) was a southern region of ancient Mesopotamia, and later the southern part of Babylon, now south-central Iraq. An agricultural civilization flourished here during the 3rd and 4th millennia B.C. The Sumerians built canals, established an irrigation system, and were skilled in the use of metals (silver, gold, and copper) to make pottery, jewelry, and weapons. They invented the cuneiform system of writing. Various kings founded dynasties at Kish, Erech, and Ur. King Sargon of Agade (c. 2600 B.C.) brought the region under the Semites (Hebrews) who blended their culture with the Sumerians.

Sumerian inscriptions are the oldest literature in history. More than 90 percent of these inscriptions are administrative, economic, and legal documents, including inventories, promissory notes, receipts, deeds of sale, marriage contracts, wills, and court decisions. The first great legend, the Gilgamesh epic, based on the life of one of Sumer’s early kings, was recorded on clay tablets. Gilgamesh, hoping to achieve immortality, pursued immortality through plants and animals—until he died. Before the mid-nineteenth century A.D., the existence of the Sumerian people and language were not suspected. The first major excavations leading to the discovery of Sumer were conducted from 1842 to 1854.

Use a Bible concordance and/or Bible dictionary to look up Sumer and Sumerians. Note how many times this location and people are referred to in the Bible. See Bible Study Aids in the Research Area

Find a map of Sumer to study and include in your portfolio. Use a Bible atlas (such as The Student Bible Atlas) or visit the Internet site Bible Maps.

Do research to find out about Sumerians. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:
Books

Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World
Read: Use the index to look up entries about the Summerians.

First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)
Read: "Uruk" and "Ur" (pages 34, 35, 40- 45).

Kingfisher History Encyclopedia
Read: "Sumer and Akkad 5000-1600 B.C."

Ancient Civilizations
Read: "The Sumerians."

Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World
Read: All entries about the Sumer. Use the index to look up Sumer.

Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery
Read: All entries about the Sumer. Use the index to look up Sumer.

Sumer and the Sumerians by Harriet Crawford
Description: This is an illustrated synthesis of recent and archaeological historical research. (April 1991) Cambridge Univ Pr (Pap Txt); ISBN: 0521388503.

History Begins at Sumer: 39 Firsts in Man's Recorded History by Samual Kramer.
Description: The classic account of the achievements of the Sumerians, who lived in what is now southern Iraq. They were the developers of the cuneiform system of writing, perhaps their greatest contribution to civilization, which allowed laws and literature to be recorded for the first time. The book presents a cross section of the Sumerian "firsts" in all the major fields of human endeavor, including government and politics, education and literature, philosophy and ethics, law and justice, agriculture and medicine, even love and family. (December 1989) University of Pennsylvania Press; ISBN: 0812212762.

Internet Sources

The Sumerians
Description: Brief survey of Sumerians from Ancient Peoples of the Bible.

The Sumerians of Mesopotamia
Description: Furnishes a history of the Sumerians of Mesopotamia who are the earliest known civilization able to read and write.

The Sumerians
Description: Details the beliefs of the Sumerians, their major cities, their division of power and agricultural-based commerce.
Step 3 Expand

The ancient civilization had no natural barriers, so the region became home to a variety of invading peoples, including Ubaidians, Semites, and the Sumerians themselves. Sumerians went to war in chariots, shielded with copper helmets and armed with copper spears. Find pictures of what was believed to be the armor of the Sumerians from the library or Internet. Sketch or trace for your portfolio.

Step 3 Expand

Make a display (use a poster and colored pencils or markers), of items in a Sumerian city-state based on your research. Include: a title, legend, a ziggurat, city wall, farmland, irrigation system, narrow winding streets, government buildings, courtyards, and homes of the different social classes.
Step 3 Expand

Write a traditional essay about the early Sumerians. Include what they looked like, who and how they worshiped, marriage customs, approximate population, government, basic laws, money system, entertainment, clothing, food, what their homes were like, their education system and written language, the roles of men and women, their weapons and scientific achievements, transportation, agriculture, etc. Refer to the "Structure of the Traditional Essay" and "Sample of a Traditional Essay" in Writers INC or "How to Write an Essay."

Step 4 Excel

Using information learned from this lesson, create a crossword puzzle with questions about the ancient Sumerians. Make copies and distribute to your family members. See if anyone can solve the puzzle.
Civilizations: Assyria 1200-700 B.C.

Timeline

- 745-612: Period of Assyrian dominance
- 745: Tiglath-pileser III becomes king of Assyria.
- 722: Assyria conquers the kingdom of Israel.
- 710: Sargon II conquers Babylon.
- 671: Assyria conquers Egypt.
- 663: Ashurbainipal conquers Egypt.
- 625-585: Period of Neo-Babylonian (Chaldean) dominance

Step 1 Excite

The first mention of Assyria in the Bible is extremely ancient. Genesis 2:14 speaks of the region in relation to the Garden of Eden. Although founded as early as 1700 B.C., the Assyrian Empire, with its capital at Nineveh, actually had its greatest influence on Bible History during the period from about 900 to 600 B.C. It was the Assyrians who conquered and exiled the northern kingdom of Israelites whose capital was at Samaria, resulting in the "Lost Ten Tribes" of Israel. The prophets Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Zechariah all refer to Assyria. The Assyrian empire eventually declined, and by 600 B.C. it was overcome by the Babylonians. (Blank, 1998)

The Assyrian empire reached its golden age from around 745 BC to 626 BC. Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations overlapped, with Babylon under Assyrian rule for long periods. King Nebuchadrezza II (604-562 B.C.) is significant in Assyrian Babylonian history.

Use a Bible concordance and/or Bible dictionary to look up Sumer and Sumerians. Note how many times this location and people are referred to in the Bible.
Step 2 Examine

The Northern Kingdom of Israel became a vassal state under the Assyrians in 841 B.C. In 722 B.C. the Assyrians conquered Samara and exiled many of the people of Israel to regions near the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. As the Assyrians advanced down the coastal plain of Palestine in the time of King Hezekiah of Judah, they threatened to capture Jerusalem. The prophet gave assurance that Jerusalem would not be taken, and the Assyrian army experienced a plague and departed. The prophet announced that Assyria would be defeated. After the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., Josiah of Judah allied himself with the Babylonians in an attempt to defeat Assyria. Josiah was killed, but the Babylonians prevailed and made Assyria part of the expanding Babylonian empire. (Bible Tutor).

Find a map of Assyria in Ancient Mesopotamia to study and include in your portfolio. Use a Bible atlas (such as The Student Bible Atlas) or see the Internet site Bible Maps.

Conduct research on the Assyrian Empire. Find out about the geographical features and the Assyrian army. Look at the extent of the Empire. Research how the army was organized. Find out how important the army was in the expansion of the Empire. Use an encyclopedia, a nonfiction book, or the Internet. We recommend the following:

Books

- Ancient Civilizations
  Read: "The Assyrians."

- The Usborne Book of the Ancient World
  Read: "The Assyrians" (page 74).

- Kingfisher History Encyclopedia

- Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World
  Read: All index entries under "Assyrians" ("Origins," "Rise to Power," "War with Babylonians," and "Warfare."

Internet Sources

- Assyria and the Destruction of Israel
  Description: A sample unit from Diana Waring's Ancient Civilizations and the Bible.

- Easton's Bible Dictionary "Assyria"

- Old Testament History: Assyrian Dominance (745-640 B.C.)
**Step 2 Examine**

Read this overview about Assyria from *Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

General character of the empire. -- The Assyrian monarchs bore sway over a number of petty kings through the entire extent of their dominions. These native princes were feudatories of the great monarch, of whom they held their crown by the double tenure of homage and tribute. It is not quite certain how far Assyria required a religious conformity from the subject people. Her religion was a gross and complex polytheism, comprising the worship of thirteen principal and numerous minor divinities, at the head of whom stood the chief god, Asshur, who seems to be the deified patriarch of the nation. (Genesis 10:22)

Civilization of the Assyrians. -- The civilization of the Assyrians was derived originally from the Babylonians. They were a Shemitic race originally resident in Babylonia (which at that time was Cushite) and thus acquainted with the Babylonian inventions and discoveries. They ascended the valley of the Tigris and established in the tract immediately below the Armenian mountains a separate and distinct nationality. Still, as their civilization developed it became in many respects peculiar. Their art is of home growth. But they were still in the most important points barbarians. Their government was rude, their religion coarse and sensual, and their conduct of war cruel. Men, women and children were often thrown into large fires set in cities that did not surrender, the city rules would often find their heads on stakes outside the city as a warning to others.

Modern discoveries in Assyria. -- Much interest has been excited in reference to Assyria by the discoveries lately made there, which confirm and illustrate the Bible. The most important of them is the finding of the stone tablets or books which formed the great library at Nineveh, founded by Shalmaneser B.C. 860, but embodying tablets written 2000 years B.C. This library was more than doubled by Sardanapalus. These tablets were broken into fragments, but many of them have been put together and deciphered by the late Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum. All these discoveries of things hidden for ages, but now come to light, confirm the Bible.

**Step 3 Expand**

Write a traditional essay about the Assyrians. Include what they looked like, who and how they worshiped, marriage customs, approximate population, government, basic laws, money system, entertainment, clothing, food, what their homes were like, their education system and written language, the roles of men and women, their weapons and scientific achievements, transportation, agriculture, etc. Refer to the "Structure of the Traditional Essay" and "Sample of a Traditional Essay" in Writers INC or "How to Write an Essay."
Step 4 Excel

Use your own words to rewrite the descriptions of each summary from Smith’s Bible dictionary (above): General character of the empire, Civilization of the Assyrians, Modern discoveries in Assyria.
Civilizations: Babylonian 625-536

Timeline BC

- 625: Beginnings of the Chaldean kingdom in Babylon.
- 612: Assyrian capital of Nineveh is destroyed by the Chaldeans or Neo-Babylonians.
- 587: Jerusalem is taken by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon.

Step 1 Excite

Note: The lesson will only introduce you to Babylon. You'll read about the Babylonian Captivity or Babylonian Exile (the forced detention of Jews in Babylonia following the latter's conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598 and 587 B.C.) in the Ancient Israel unit.

The Babylonian Empire played a central role in a large segment of Bible History. Many believe it is the location of the Garden of Eden. Babylon existed from 700 BC to about 540 BC Ninivah and the Assyrian Empire fell in 612 BC at the hands of the Babylonians, Persians, and Medes. The Babylonian civilizations were similar to the Sumerian civilization, both based on agriculture rather than industry. The country consisted of about a dozen cities surrounded by small villages. Babylon was the capital of Babylonia during Bible times, and it was one of the major cities of the ancient world. The Babylonians worshiped many gods, often of Sumerian origin. Their chief god was Marduk, whose cult center was at Babylon.

According to Wayne Blank in Ancient Empires Babylon,

"The Old Babylonian Kingdom was at its peak at about the time of God's calling of Abraham, who was from Ur Of The Chaldees. However, after many centuries of conflict, the old empire eventually became subject to the Assyrians, from about 885 to 607 BC It was during that period that the Assyrians (see Ancient Empires - Assyria) conquered and took into captivity the northern kingdom of Israel, from which the "Lost Ten Tribes" never returned (2 Kings 17:1-23).

Babylonia was divided into Accad to the north, and Summer ("Shinar" of the Old Testament) to the south. Along with Ur and the city of Babylon itself, other major cities were Uruk, or Erech (Genesis 10:10), Larsa, or Ellasar (Genesis 14:1), Sepharvaim (2 Kings 17:24), Eridu, and Calneh (Genesis 10:10)."
The New Babylonian Empire, which existed from 606 to 536 B.C., fully conquered the southern kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. It was then that the Babylonians, under the rule of King Nebuchadnezzar, completely devastated the city of Jerusalem, looted and burned the original Temple of God (built by Solomon) and carried the people of Judah, including the prophets Daniel and Ezekiel, off into captivity.

In 536 B.C., after 70 years of supremacy, the Babylonian empire (the "head of gold" on Daniel's statue) came to an end when it fell to the Persians. There is much more yet to come however. "Babylon" has many prophetic applications that have yet to be completed (Revelation 18:1-24)."

**Step 2 Examine**

Read the following verses about Babylon: Genesis 10:10; (In the land of Shinar) Genesis 11:2; (Tower of) Gen. 11:1-9; (Capital of the kingdom of Babylon) Daniel 4:30; 2 Kings 25:13; 2 Chronicles 36:6, 7, 10, 18, 20; (Gates of) Isaiah 45:1, 2; Jeremiah 51:58; (Walled) Jeremiah 51:44; (Splendor of) Isaiah 14:4.

Use a Bible concordance and/or Bible dictionary to look up Babylon and Babylonian Empire. Make notes for activities below. See Bible Study Aids in the Research Area

Find a map of Babylon to study and include in your portfolio. Use a Bible atlas (such as *The Student Bible Atlas*) or see the Internet Site Bible Maps.

Research Babylon. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

**Books**

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**  
  Read: "Babylon Revival" (page 36-37).

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**  
  Read: "Babylon" (page 80-81) and "Babylon Revival: 626-560" (pages 78-79).

- **Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World**  

- **The Usborne Book of the Ancient World**  
  Read: The Babylonians (page 76).

- **Ancient Civilizations**  
  Read: "Ancient Babylon"
Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World
Read: All entries under Babylon and Babylonians in the index.

Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery
Read: "Ancient Babylon," and "Babylon Fall"

Internet Sources

The Life and Times of the Babylonians
Description: A document of the important aspects of the Babylonians. It covers mainly the Babylon of the great Amorite King Hammurabi who ruled at about the time of Abraham’s journey to Israel.

Gods and Heroes of The Babylonians
Description: Offers the genealogy of the older and younger gods of Babylonian mythology.

Babylonians
Description: Includes brief articles about the Babylonian civilization, Hammurabi, Hanging Gardens, and Babylonian legal concepts

Babylonians - Stele of Hammurabi
Description: Describes how Hammurabi's code implies the existence of cataract procedures. Furnishes a background for ancient medicine.

The Babylonians
Description: Offers explanations of technologies from Ancient People of the Bible.

General Knowledge: Babylonians
Description: Overview of Babylonians from Bible Tutor.

Babylonia
Description: Encyclopedia article from Britannica.com

Babylon 580B.C.
Description: A tour of the ancient world of Babylon, featuring daily life, law, astronomy, culture, literature, and more. Includes a quiz.

Babylonian and Egyptian Mathematics
Description: Article and map and graphics from The MacTutor History of Mathematics archive

Why Babylon?
Description: Article from Daily Bible Study.
Step 2 Examine

Do research about the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, Bible dictionary, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

- **Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World**: Read: "Babylon Under Nebuchadnezzar II" page 76.
- **Tower of Babel**
  **Description**: Offers Moses' mention of the tower in Genesis and Nebuchadnezzar's inscriptions in the purported ruins of the tower.
- **Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar**
  **Description**: Offers transcriptions of the columns depicting Nebuchadnezzar's rise and establishment of Babylon.
- **Nebuchadnezzar**
  **Description**: Historical text accounts of Nebuchadnezzar.
- **King Nebuchadnezzar**
  **Description**: An examination of the Babylonian King, from Daily Bible Study.

Step 3 Expand

Write a traditional essay about the Babylonians. Include what they looked like, who and how they worshiped, marriage customs, approximate population, government, basic laws, money system, entertainment, clothing, food, what their homes were like, their education system and written language, the roles of men and women, their weapons and scientific achievements, transportation, agriculture, etc. Refer to the "Structure of the Traditional Essay" and "Sample of a Traditional Essay" in Writers INC or "How to Write an Essay".

Write a summary of the story of Nebuchadnezzar. Refer to "Writing About a Person" in Writers INC.

Step 4 Excel

Make a mock newspaper titled the Babylonian Times. Include at least two short articles, illustrations, a few classifieds, and advertisements. Use butcher paper or tape two pieces of 8½" x 11" paper together to make 17" x 11" pages.
Civilizations: Persia 612-330 B.C.

Step 1 Excite

The Persian Empire dominated Mesopotamia from 612-330 BC. We know much about the Persians because of their interaction with the Greeks who wrote prolifically. It was the largest empire until it was overrun by Alexander the Great in 331 BC.

Though the terms Persia/Persian occur only in Ezekiel, 2 Chronicles, Esther, Daniel, and Ezra, ancient Persia played an important role in the Old Testament books, including at the least 2 Chronicles, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachai.

Persia extended from the Indus to Thrace, and from the Caspian Sea to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The Persians were originally a Medic tribe which settled in Persia, on the eastern side of the Persian Gulf. They were Aryans, their language belonging to the eastern division of the Indo-European group. One of their chiefs, Teispes, conquered Elam in the time of the decay of the Assyrian Empire, and established himself in the district of Anzan. His descendants branched off into two lines, one line ruling in Anzan, while the other remained in Persia. Cyrus II., king of Anzan, finally united the divided power, conquered Media, Lydia, and Babylonia, and carried his arms into the far East. His son, Cambyses, added Egypt to the empire, which, however, fell to pieces after his death. It was reconquered and thoroughly organized by Darius, the son of Hystaspses, whose dominions extended from India to the Danu. (Easton)

Step 2 Examine

Read this overview about Persia from *Smith's Bible Dictionary*:

Character of the nation . --The Persians were a people of lively and impressionable minds, brave and impetuous in war, witty, passionate, for Orientals truthful, not without some spirit of generosity: and of more intellectual capacity than the generality of Asiatics. In the times anterior to Cyrus they were noted for the simplicity of their habits, which offered a strong contrast to the luxuriousness of the Medes; but from the late of the Median overthrow this simplicity began to decline. Polygamy was commonly practiced among them. They were fond of the pleasures of the table. In war they fought bravely, but without discipline.

Religion . --The religion which the Persians brought with there into Persia proper seems to have been of a very simple character, differing from natural religion in little except that it was deeply tainted with Dualism. Like the other Aryans, the Persians worshipped one supreme God. They had few temples, and no altars or images.
Language. --The Persian language was closely akin to the Sanskrit, or ancient language of India. Modern Persian is its degenerate representative, being largely impregnated with Arabic.

History. --The history of Persia begins with the revolt from the Medes and the accession of Cyrus the Great, B.C. 558. Cyrus defeated Croesus, and added the Lydian empire to his dominions. This conquest was followed closely by the submission of the Greek settlements on the Asiatic coast, and by the reduction of Caria and Lycia. The empire was soon afterward extended greatly toward the northeast and east. In B.C. 539 or 538, Babylon was attacked, and after a stout defence fell into the hands of Cyrus. This victory first brought the Persians into contact with the Jews. The conquerors found in Babylon an oppressed race--like themselves, abhorers of idols, and professors of a religion in which to a great extent they could sympathize. This race Cyrus determined to restore to their own country: which he did by the remarkable edict recorded in the first chapter of Ezra. (Ezra 1:2-4) He was slain in an expedition against the Massagetae or the Derbices, after a reign of twenty-nine years. Under his son and successor, Cambyses, the conquest of Egypt took place, B.C. 525. This prince appears to be the Ahasuerus of (Ezra 4:6) Gomates, Cambyses' successor, reversed the policy of Cyrus with respect to the Jews, and forbade by an edict the further building of the temple. (Ezra 4:17-22) He reigned but seven months, and was succeeded by Darius. Appealed to, in his second year, by the Jews, who wished to resume the construction of their temple, Darius not only granted them this privilege, but assisted the work by grants from his own revenues, whereby the Jews were able to complete the temple as early as his sixth year. (Ezra 6:1-15) Darius was succeeded by Xerxes, probably the Ahasuerus of Esther. Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, reigned for forty years after his death and is beyond doubt the king of that name who stood in such a friendly relation toward Ezra, (Ezra 7:11-28) and Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 2:1-9) etc. He is the last of the Persian kings who had any special connection with the Jews, and the last but one mentioned in Scripture. His successors were Xerxes II., Sogdianus Darius Nothus, Artaxerxes Mnemon, Artaxerxes Ochus, and Darius Codomannus, who is probably the "Darius the Persian" of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 12:22) These monarchs reigned from B.C. 424 to B.C. 330. The collapse of the empire under the attack of Alexander the Great took place B.C. 330.

Four great and powerful kings dominated the political history of Persia.

Cyrus was the founder of the Mede-Persian Empire. He was a great military leader, bent on universal conquest. Babylon fell before his army (B.C. 538) on the night of Belshazzar's feast (Daniel 5:30), and then the ancient dominion of Assyria was also added to his empire Read about him in the Bible in Cyrus King of Persia - 2 Chronicles 36:22,23; Ezra 1; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13,14,17; 6:3; Isaiah 41:2,3; 44:28; 45:1-4,13; 46:11; 48:14,15.

Artaxerxes also known as Cambyses is the king who obstructed the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 4:7). He was probably the Smerdis of profane history. He was mentioned in Ezra 7:1, in the seventh year (B.C. 458) of whose reign Ezra led a second colony of Jews back to Jerusalem, was probably Longimanus, who reigned for forty years (B.C. 464-425); the grandson of Darius, who, fourteen years later, permitted Nehemiah to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Read about him in the Bible in Nehemiah 1 - 13, Ezra 7-10.
Darius, after killing Pseudo Smerdis, defeated 9 kings (local uprisings) in 19 battles in 2 years. the son of Hystaspes the founder of the Perso-Arian dynasty. Upon the usurpation of the magian Smerdis, he conspired with six other Persian chiefs to overthrow the impostor and on the success of the plot was placed upon the throne, B.C. 521. With regard to the Jews, Darius Hystaspes pursued the same policy as Cyrus, and restored to them the privileges which they had lost. (Ezra 5:1) etc.; Ezra 6:1 etc. He established a government which became a model for many future governments; (A) Established a tax-collection system; (B) Allowed locals to keep customs and religions; (C) Divided his empire into districts known as Satrapies; (D) Built a system of roads still used today; (E) Established a complex postal system; (F) Established a network of spies he called the "Eyes and ears of the King."(G) Built two new capital cities, one at Susa and one at Persepolis. Read about him in the Bible in Ezra 5,6; Daniel 5:31; 6; 9:1.

Xerxes was Darius's son. He continued the war against the Greeks but was defeated by Alexander the Great. The book of Esther was written late in the reign of Xerxes (or possibly his son's) Read about him in the Bible in Esther 1-10.

Find out more about Persia by reading any of the following:

**Books**

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**
  - Read: "The Persian Empire" (pages 40-41).

- **Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent**

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**
  - Read: "Rise of the Persian Empire" and "The Empire of Darius" (page 82-83, 84-85).

- **The Usborne Book of the Ancient World**
  - Read: "The Persians" (page 77).

- **Ancient Civilizations**
  - Read: "The Persian Empire" (pages 14-15).

**Internet Sources**

- **The Persian Empire**
  - **Description**: A list of important events of the Persian era to help one understand the significance of the Persian civilization on future governments.

- **Early Days of Persia**
  - **Description**: A small timeline from 2000 BC to 642 AD.
Step 3 Expand

Read the Book of Esther. Write a traditional essay comparing the way the Hebrew's lived while in captivity and the way the Persians lived. Refer to the "Structure of the Traditional Essay" and "Sample of a Traditional Essay" in Writers INC or "How to Write an Essay."

Step 4 Excel

Use the Bible references above and write a summary about each Persian King. Include your feelings of what God is telling us about these men and their actions. Include your writing in your portfolio. Explained what you've learned in this lesson orally to your parents.
Art

Step 1 Excite

The lower parts of the Mesopotamian region encompassed a fertile plain, but its inhabitants perpetually faced the dangers of outside invaders, extremes in temperature, drought, violent thunderstorms and rainstorms, floods, and attacks by wild beasts. Their art reflects both their love and fear of these natural forces. Mesopotamian civilizations are well known for their wonderful masterpieces of art; many of which can be seen in famous museums like the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Iraq Museum.

View and compare art from Mesopotamia with art from other ancient civilizations using library books or the site described below.

Timelines of Art History is an outstanding site for the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, India, Japan, and China. Each entry on the time line links to a page of narrative and a large gallery of images.

Step 2 Examine

Find examples of Mesopotamian art in a book from the library or using the Internet resources. One of the greatest qualities of art is the way it "speaks" to each of us. People may share opinions about a work of art, and even feel similar emotional responses, but ultimately our reactions to art and our interpretations of it are as individual and unique as we are.

We recommend any of the following:

Books

Kingfisher History Encyclopedia
Read: Prehistoric Arts and Crafts.

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent
Read: "Arts and Crafts" (pages 46-53).

First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)
Read: "The Art of Pottery" (pages 26-27).
Internet Sources

The Fertile Crescent and the Eastern Aegean
Description: Illustrations from Assyria, Babylon, and Sumer civilizations.

Royal Tombs of Ur
Description: See exquisite objects from the Royal Cemetery of Ur--elegant jewelry, gold and silver, and more--representing one of the most spectacular discoveries in ancient Mesopotamia.

Mesopotamian Art 3500 - 331 BC
Description: Art History 101 from About.com.

The Mesopotamian collection of the Oriental Institute Museum

The Persian art site

The Detroit Institute of Arts

University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Step 3 Expand

Express your responses to art by writing stories inspired by the art. Examine a piece of art. Write a description to help others imagine what the art looks like. Select the most important details to include in a descriptive paragraph: distinguish between factual and judgmental language. Write a descriptive text using only facts; write a story using both facts and judgmental language.

Step 4 Excel

Discuss and make a list of what you can tell about the civilization from the art.
Agriculture

Step 1 Excite

Brainstorm and discuss how you believe the first people farmed, and make a list including items involved with pest control, tools, watering, technology, etc.

Step 2 Examine

The most common implements of farming in prehistoric times were the plow, the hoe, the harrow, and the rake. Soon, farmers used yoked animals (like camels, cattle, etc.) to power plows and harrows. Later Terrace agriculture was a common method of farming. Irrigated agriculture was prevalent in the river plains of Africa and Asia.

Do research to find and list a minimum of three forms of farming. We recommend:

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**
  Read: "First Farmers" (ignore the dates).

- **Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent**
  Read: "From Hunters to Farmers" (pages 9-14).

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**
  Read: "The First Farmers."

- **Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World**
  Read: Use the index to look up entries Farming in ancient times.

- **Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World**
  Read: Farming in Canaan," "Farming in Sumer." Use the index to look up Farming.

- **Ancient Civilizations**
  Read: "Introduction." pages 6-7.

- **The Farmer Through History (Journey Through History) by Peter Chrisp**
  Description A pictorial of farming through the ages. Elementary reading level.
Internet Resources

- **World History 8,000 BC to 3,500 BC**
  
  **Description** Map and overview of this time from Poppa's Ancient World.

- **Beginning and Development of Agriculture**
  
  **Description** Overview of the history of food & agriculture from the Agropolis-Museum with links to maps and further information.

- **Development of Agriculture**
  
  **Description** Article with illustrations and map explaining the transition from hunter/gatherers to settled gardeners (horticulturists and the development of agriculture).

**Step 3 Expand**

Write a paper contrasting and comparing life after the flood in Bible times, in the Middle Ages, 100 years ago in your local area, and in your local area today. Refer to "Methods of Organization" (098) in *Writers INC*. Share it with a group or family. Contrast and compare by making a vein diagram showing your results. (See Teacher's Guide for instructions).

**Step 4 Excel**

Write an essay explaining how the Agricultural Revolution altered human history. Use materials from the resources to draw evidence for your presentation. Remember to focus on both the process and the impact of the event.

Or make and share a **storyboard**. A storyboard is a graphic, sequential depiction of a narrative. Sketch or trace an example of each type of farmer through history showing the farmer's technical progress from digging-stick to hoe and from the cattle-drawn wooden to the tractor-driven, steel-shared plow.
Architecture

Step 1 Excite

Imagine you are on a deserted island. Brainstorm and list the natural materials you would use to build yourself a shelter. How would you fasten the materials together?

Step 2 Examine

The ziggurat was a temple-tower and the principal form of religious edifice in ancient Mesopotamia. Each was constructed of mud brick, and many were faced with glazed brick. They increased in stepped corners to a small temple or sanctuary at the peak. Large temples were erected in the name of the deity who was worshiped as the divine ruler and protector of the city. Many priests, priestesses, singers, musicians, sacred prostitutes, and eunuchs conducted Temple rites. Sacrifices were offered daily. The most famous of the ziggarats was the temple-tower of Marduk in Babylon.

Find pictures in books at the library or on the Internet depicting what a city looked like in ancient Mesopotamia. We recommend:

Books

- **Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World**
  See: "The Begining of Civilization" (pages 4-5).

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**
  Read: "Mesopotamian Sites" (pages 31-32) and "Ziggurats (pages 46-47).

- **Ancient Civilizations**
  See: "The Sumerians" (pages 8-9).

- **Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery**
  See: Chapter 2 "Dawn of Civilizations."

Internet Sources

- **Ziggurats of Ur**
  **Description** Describes the various sizes and uses of ziggarats in the city of Ur, and provides drawn images.

- **Ziggurats**
  **Description** Furnishes background and photos of the White Temple at Uruk, the ziggurat of Ur-Nammu, and Marduk or the Tower of Babel.
Is there archaeological evidence of the Tower of Babel?

**Description**
Discussion of the reasons, methods, and culture surrounding the building of the Tower of Babel.

**Mesopotamian Temples**

**Description**
Details the architectural aspects of the ancient temples, palaces, and ziggurats of Mesopotamia.

**Encarta: Ziggurat**

**Map of Ziggurats**

**Description**
Color map shows location of ziggurat (temple) sites; many links.

**Step 3 Expand**

Using the resources from the activity above, trace or sketch several samples of architecture, including a ziggurat. Then do a full report on Mesopotamia. Include a map of the Fertile Crescent and your architecture samples.

**Step 3 Expand**

Remains of the world's first cities are the most noteworthy features of the landscape in southern Iraq, and for nearly two centuries, archaeologists have probed them and puzzled over their artifacts. Mounds of building rubble and associated artifacts can be as large as a mile in diameter, and some rise more than 100 feet above the plain. Babylon, Ur, Uruk, Nippur, and Kish have yielded abundant evidence of the physical culture of Mesopotamian society. Thanks to their citizens' relatively imperishable writing medium, clay tablets, they have also provided detailed textual testimony on political, intellectual, religious, and social institutions. Use the resources listed above to find the methods scientists use to interpret their artifacts. How do their findings compare with the Bible?
Archeology

Step 1 Excite

What if the entire contents of your home or bedroom—clothes, papers, furniture, etc.—were thrown into a large hole, and then the hole was filled in with dirt and left to stand up against the elements for a few centuries. What would be left? How accurate do you think those remains would be in telling people about your life? What techniques do you think Archaeologists use to interpret evidence?

Step 2 Examine

Research Archaeology. Find out about the scientific discipline, methods, and tools of archaeology. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**
  - *Read:* "Physical Background," "Archaeology in the Near East" (pages 8-13) and Archaeology, War and Looting (pages 90-91).

- **Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery**
  - *Read:* "Introducing History."

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**
  - *Read:* "What is History."

- **Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World**
  - *Read:* Use the index to look up "Archaeology".

- **Archaeology of the Land of the Bible: 10,000-586 B.C.E.** by Amihai Mazar
  - **Description:** Israeli archaeologist Mazar (Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew U. in Jerusalem) introduces the achievements of the archaeological research in Israel and Jordan, and discusses its implications for our knowledge of the world of the Old Testament. He covers the period from the first permanent settlements to the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian domination of the country.
Internet Sources

Archaeology Resources

Description: List of links about Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Nubia, and Israel from the WWW Virtual Library on the Middle East.

General Archaeology

"Archaeology & the Patriarchs"

Ancient Texts Relating to the Bible

Read how the discoveries of archaeology verified the reliability of the Bible.

"Finding and Interpreting the Evidence"

Step 3 Expand

Write a summary of your research findings from the above (minimum 200 words)

Step 3 Expand

Create a fictional primary source from Ancient Mesopotamia. A primary source is an original written document from the time period being studied (newspapers, deeds, tax and census records, photographs, diaries, and maps). Show your source to someone and ask what he or she can tell from it. What questions should be asked?

Step 4 Excel

Make a brochure depicting the tools archaeologists use. Illustrate, identify, and tell what each tool is used for.
Tower of Babel

Step 1 Excite

After the flood, ignoring God's command to fill the earth, most of the people settled together on the plain of Shinar (the future site of Babylon) and started building a tower to their own glory. God confused their language so they could not understand each other. They stopped building the tower of Babel and scattered over the face of the earth. Read the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 9:25-27; 11:1-9. B-¼

Step 2 Examine

Do research about The Tower of Babel. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

- Adam and His Kin by Ruth Beechick
  Read: Chapter 15 "The Tower of Bel and Chapter 16 Aftermath."

- Genesis: Finding Our Roots by Ruth Beechick
  Read: Unit 5 Book of Shem.

- Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery

- Kingfisher History Encyclopedia
  Read: "The Tower of Babel" page 37.

Internet Sources

- Is there archaeological evidence of the Tower of Babel?
  Description Discussion on the reasons, methods, and culture surrounding the building of the Tower of Babel.

- The Tower of Babel
  Description A brief history of the Tower of Babel, from Daily Bible Study.

- Tower of Babel Commentary
  Description Offers a commentary illuminating the symbolic and religious meaning of the Tower of Babel.
Step 3 Expand

Genesis recounts that the two cities Shinar and Babel formed the original kingdom of Nimrod. The image of the city of Babel stood in sharp contrast to the nomadic life of Israel's patriarchs. Moreover, the episode at Babel foreshadowed the dangers that Israel faced as it settled among the Canaanite cities with their rich temples and false gods. The main reason God punished His people with the exile in Assyria and Babylon was their persistent desire to accommodate themselves in the idolatry and lifestyles in the nations around them. Make a contrast-and-compare graphic (see Teacher's Guide) showing how their actions compare with Christians today. Do we have difficulty living in a corrupt world? Why does God command separation?

Step 3 Expand

Make a mind map about the Tower of Babel. Use sheets of unlined paper and colored markers or pencils. Put an image or circle in the center and write in the phrase Tower of Babel. Draw lines out from the center as you determine the major categories of information (tower, language, etc.). Branch lines from these will hold subtopics. Continue branching until you are out of room. Use different colors for each cluster of information. Ask yourself, "Who?" "What?" "Where?" "When?" and "How?" Colors and patterns will organize your ideas into meaningful groups that will make connections and relationships more clear. Also use symbols, numbers, arrows, or other "doodles" on your mind map (tower, stick figures, etc.). VA-1

Step 4 Excel

Choose one of the "branches" of your Tower of Babel mind map to study in detail. Pick an activity such as summary writing, an experiment, or a project to demonstrate what you have learned. The category and amount of points will depend on the subject and length of time necessary to complete the activity. Share your project with a group or individual. Parent's discretion.
Cities

Step 1 Excite

Brainstorm and make a list of positive and negative aspects of people starting to live in villages, towns, and large communities.

Step 2 Examine

Lagash, Ur, Eredu and Uruk were the main cities of Sumer. Kish and Babylonia were cities of Babylonia. The ancient city of Ur was the capital of the Mesopotamian Civilization.

Do research about ancient cities. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

- **Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent**
  
  **Read:** "From Villages to Empires" (pages 15-25) and "Cities of Mesopotamia" (Pages 32-36).

- **First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)**
  
  **Read:** "The Birth of the City" (page 32-33), "States in Conflict" (40-45) and "Kingdoms and Empires" (50-54).

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**
  
  **Read:** Look up Lagash, Ur, Eredu, Uruk, Kish, Babylonia in the index.

- **Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World**
  
  **Read:** Look up Lagash, Ur, Eredu, Uruk, Kish, Babylonia in the index.

Internet Sources

City of Ur
Description: Overview of Ur's history.

Lagash
Description: Article from Britannica.com.

The Sumerian City State
Description: This site is an Ancient Mesopotamia seventh grade World History/World Geography unit designed to be used by both students and teachers.

Step 3 Expand

The fertile Mesopotamian river valley's and plains were desirable for settlement. This was also the very thing that made it susceptible to attack. The richness of this area attracted neighboring people who were ready and willing to become the occupants of this area. But first they had to take it from those already there. The early Mesopotamian states needed self-defense and as well as irrigation. This led them to build walled settlements for protection and canals for irrigation.

Make a contrast and compare sheet of two of the major cities in Mesopotamia. Include the different religions, laws, agriculture and art of these cities.

Step 4 Excel

Abraham was called by God to go to a totally different society than to what he was accustomed. This dramatic change from Ur to the land of Canaan was voluntary. His journey had many surprises for him and he had to make some major life changes. He had what has come to be known as 'culture shock'.

Write a letter as if you were Abraham writing to the his folks back home in Ur. Include how such things as the religion, art, money, education and government of the civilization are different in the new land. Refer to "Writing About a Place" in Writers INC and to the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.
Climate

Step 1 Excite

Discuss the climate and vegetation today and in the past.

- What has stayed the same, what has changed.
- What was the land like?
- What did people need to survive?
- What could people improve to produce more for their needs?

Step 2 Examine

Mesopotamia - the land between rivers - is part of the Fertile Crescent. Abundant river water and fertile ground was the ideal condition even though the rain fall was sparse. Since rain was not abundant in much of the area of Mesopotamia, irrigation had to be used. Using the encyclopedia, or other resources, research the irrigation systems used in the early civilizations of the area.

Step 3 Expand

From your studies, write an essay describing the conditions of the climate for the area known as Mesopotamia. Identify the different types of terrain. Draw a map of the area locating and identifying the mountainous regions, lowland regions, plains, and marsh lands. What are the winters like in each region.

Step 4 Excel

Flooding is a problem for many areas of the world. When the snow from the mountains of the Mesopotamia melted quickly, they caused flooding in the central and lower areas. Many other areas of flooding problems. Using the resources available, encyclopedia, other books, internet, etc., compare the floods of Mesopotamia with the flooding which occurs in the Nile River, the Mississippi River and in Bangladesh. What are the characteristic differences between the flood types. How does this affect the agriculture of the different societies? What measures have the present nations of each taken to "control" this flooding? How has this affected the present societies of each.
Cuneiform

Step 1 Excite

Cuneiform writing, which originated in southern Mesopotamia, was probably invented by the Sumerians, who used it to inscribe the Sumerian language. Originally, each sign stood for a word. Words were expressed by pictographs of related objects (for example, god by a star, to stand and to go by a foot). Some signs stood for several different words. The earliest ancient libraries were clay-tablet repositories in ancient Mesopotamia, and the later papyrus-scroll libraries in Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

Before writing, human knowledge was confined by the limits of memory—what one could learn for oneself or find out from talking to someone else. Brainstorm and make a list (or mind map) of the advantages of writing. Discuss how you would communicate with someone far away without the alphabet if you could have something delivered to them but you could not use letters. Before you read any more of this lesson, try drawing a message on paper without using any letters. Give it to a friend to see if your friend can decipher it.

Step 2 Examine

Do research to trace the alphabet regressively from today’s alphabet to cuneiform writing. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend any of the following:

Books

- First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People) Read: "Writing" (pages 38-39).
- Kingfisher History Encyclopedia Read: "Cuneiform" pages 9, 41.
- Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World Read: "Cuneiform" pages 10-11, 25.

The Birth of Writing by Robert Claiborne, The Emergence of Man Series.

Description A readable, well-illustrated survey of the birth and development of writing in the ancient Near East, with some information on writing as it appeared in the Far East and the Americas. Time Life Books: Alexandria, Virginia, 1974. ASIN: 0809412829
The Beginning of Civilization in Sumer: The Advent of Written Communication by Joan Parrish

**Description** A Unit of Study for Grades 5-8. A curriculum guide with information for teachers and activities for students. Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, University of California at Los Angeles, 1991.

*Cuneiform: Reading the Past* by C.B.F. Walker

**Description** A detailed discussion of cuneiform writing and information on how cuneiform symbols were used in mathematics. University of California Press: Berkeley, California, 1987.

**Internet Sources**

- **Ancient Texts Relating to the Bible**
  
  **Description** See different alphabets and writings from all over the world and different time periods.

- **Writing/alphabet Quiz**
  
  **Description** Weekly quiz from About.com

- **Alphabets**
  
  **Description** Article explaining the history of writing.

- **About Cuneiform Writing**
  
  **Description** Article with illustrations from about Cuneiform Writing University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

- **Early Writing Materials**
  
  **Description** Explanation of: cuneiform, early writing materials, papyrus, vellum manuscripts, early parchment, rare books, rare prints and much more from The Foliophiles Collection.

- **Learning Family Learns about Cuneiform**
  
  **Description** Overview and links about Cuneiform from a family that has dubbed themselves "The Learning Family." Their web site includes several topics and virtual field trips.

- **Cuneiform Writing Tablet 2000 B.C. Sumeria**
  
  **Description** View photos of tablet artifacts.

- **MSN Encarta "Cuneiform"**
  
  **Description** Encyclopedia provides an article about the writing form originated by the Sumerians. Also find links to related articles and premium resources.
Step 3 Expand

Write Like a Babylonian at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology site. See your monogram in cuneiform, the way an ancient Babylonian might have written it.

Step 3 Expand

Make and display a chart showing the history of the alphabet and writing. Include parchment, hieroglyphics, alphabet, library, Arabic numerals, printing press, Johann Gutenberg, rotary press, and the Linotype.

Step 4 Excel

Write another message without letters as you did in Step 1. Did studying Cuneiform help you learn to communicate better?
Daily Life

Step 1 Excite

Make a mindmap titled Life in Early Civilization. Brainstorm and list the events of a normal day if you lived in ancient Mesopotamia. Add topics like eating, sleeping, etc. Branch off these lines to ask questions such as: What did they eat? How did they cook their food? How did they carry water? How much time do you think was devoted to making the containers? How did they make their dwellings? How did they make tools? Continue brainstorming and mindmapping for 15 minutes.

Step 2 Examine

Most of daily life in Mesopotamia consisted of work. The majority of the people worked at farming. Other than farmers there were potters, builders, traders, slaves, servants, priests, kings, and elders. It has always been important for people to be able to carry things. There is a limit to what we can carry with our hands. The early Sumerians needed "artificial hands," bigger than our natural hands. Objects could be carried in hides, but hides were somewhat inconvenient because of their shapes. Gourds were probably used at first. Eventually, Sumerians learned to weave twigs into baskets. These were great for solid or dry objects, but they could not carry olive oil, flour, or (most important) water. They probably dabbed clay over the baskets to make them solid. They discovered that if they baked the mud in the sun, it would become harder, hence the invention of pottery. Do research on daily life in Mesopotamia. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

- First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)
  
  **Read:** "Early Peoples (pages 14-15) and "Early Village Life" (pages 18-19).

- Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent
  
  **Read:** "Everyday Life " (pages 42-45).

Internet Sources

- Mesopotamia Social Levels
  
  **Description:** Basic description of levels of society

- Near East: Daily Life
  
  **Description:** Overview of daily life from Odyssey Online. This site explores Near Eastern, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and sub-Saharan African cultures.
Step 3 Expand

Write a traditional essay about the people of early civilizations. Include what they looked like, who and how they worshiped, marriage customs, approximate population, government, basic laws, money systems, entertainment, clothing, food, what their homes were like, their education system and written language, the roles of men and women, their weapons and scientific achievements, transportation, agriculture, etc. Refer to the "Structure of the Traditional Essay" and "Sample of a Traditional Essay" in Writers INC or "How to Write an Essay."

Step 4 Excel

Create an album of daily life in Mesopotamia. Explore a single activity over this time period (such as farming or entertainment), a single group of people over the entire time period (such as women or military), or leisure time (such as leisure time activities of common men of this period). Title the album. Using pictures from the Internet, sketches, or photocopies from resource books, cut out images and paste them into the album. Give each entry a caption and a short description. The images must be appropriate to the time period.

Step 4 Excel

Use materials in your yard to see if you can make a watertight container out of natural resources. Drink from your container every time you get thirsty for at least one full day.
Education

Step 1 Excite

Without education, a society, culture, tribe or nation cannot exist. People must be educated in the laws of the land, the correct way to interact within the society and how to carry on basic economic activities. A society must also educate its people in the arts, architecture and religion. Education can occur in many ways. Education can be a formal state centered process. It can be done in the home, or by private groups and organization.

Step 2 Examine

In order for the four major civilizations that thrived in the ancient Mesopotamia, they had to educate their people. Using the suggested resources, Internet, library or other information, research how each of the following civilizations educated their people in government, art, architecture and religion.

- The Sumerians
- The Babylonians
- The Assyrians
- The Persians

Internet Sources

Sumer Education
Description Brief facts on education in Sumer with links to more information about Sumer from a Christian homeschool family.

The Babylonians
Description Overview of the Babylonians. Read the section on education.

The History of Education
Description Concise article on the history of education from Britannica.com
Step 3 Expand

Research the education system in the US. Discuss how this is different from the ancient education system. Discuss how these systems are the same. How would a student for the past fit in today and how would a student of today fit in the past.

Step 4 Excel

From your story you wrote about the day in the life of a youth from lesson on cities, write a chapter about this character now fitting into today's education system. What are the difficulties you might expect him/her to encounter.
Fertile Crescent

Step 1 Excite

Genesis 3:17 says "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" (KJV). Discuss what cursing the ground meant here.

Step 2 Examine

The Fertile Crescent is a crescent-shaped area stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf through the Tigris and Euphrates valley. It included all of Mesopotamia, current day Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Western Iran. It is called the Fertile Crescent because of the rich fertile soil found in the region. The Fertile Crescent gave birth to and sustained many great civilizations including those of the Assyrians, Sumerians, Canaanites, Philistines, Phoenicians/Carthaginians, Hyksos, Akkadians, Hittites, Hurrians, Mitanni, Kassites, Arameans, Amorites, Seleucids, Nabateans, Lakhmids, Ghassanids, Ummayyads, and Abbasids.

Read about the Fertile Crescent from one of the suggested resources:

Books

- Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery
  Read: Chapter 2 "Spread of Humanity."

- Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent
  Read: "Introduction" (pages 6-8).

- Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World
  Read: Use the index to look up Fertile Crescent.

- Creation to Canaan
  Read: Chapter 3 "Beginnings of a Jewish Nation."

- World History and Cultures in Christian Perspective (ABeka textbook)
  Read: Chapter 2 "Sumer: The Beginning of Postdiluvian Civilization"
Internet Sources

The Fertile Crescent Cradle of Nine Civilizations

**Description** An overview of the Fertile Crescent by high school teacher Larry Larsen. Includes quizzes and the following topics: Geography, Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Hittites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Persians.

The Hebrews

**Description** Explains how the Hebrews were originally a group of nomadic tribes that roamed Mesopotamia, Palestine, and northern Egypt.

Fertile Crescent Civilizations

**Description** Odyssey Online:

Near East

**Description** Introduction to the meaning of “The Cradle of Civilization”

**Step 3 Expand**

Write an essay about the modern inhabitants of this region from your research above. What has happened to their agriculture. Iraq is draining the marshlands of the lower river valleys, how is this affecting the land and the people of the area. Oil is abundant in this area and is a primary source of wealth. How is this affecting the Fertile Crescent?

**Step 4 Excel**

Read this essay to a family member. After reading the essay, discuss what each listener would do to change the situation in that area. What would you do?
Food

Step 1 Excite

Grains, meat, vegetables and fruits are food in most all cultures. Rice is abundant in Asia. Corn wheat and other cereals are abundant in the US. Each type of agricultural system has its own kind of produce. Mesopotamia found itself rich in emmer wheat, einkorn wheat, barley, legumes, peas and other high carbohydrate foods which people needed. This allowed the hunter gatherer people to settle and turn to farming and pastoralism.

Modern lettuce had its start as a Mediterranean weed. As early as 55 B.C., lettuce was served on the tables of Persian kings and praised for its medicinal values. The name comes from Latin words referring to its milky juice.

Brainstorm and discuss how you think modern diet differs from a diet in Ancient Mesopotamia. What are the results of straying from a natural diet?

Step 2 Examine

Read Daniel 1. From your studies describe what you think the kings portion was. This must have been the best of the land, yet Daniel rejected it. Read the Old Testament prohibitions against certain foods. You can find this in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Why do you suppose that Daniel and the others rejected the kings portion? Why do you think God had placed certain types of food in a forbidden category?

Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World

Read: "Food" in prehistory, pages 12, 15, 18-19.

The Spread Of Agriculture

Step 3 Expand

Examine the foods that modern man eats. Make a list of the foods that are common in the supermarket, and from this list, describe what you think is good and bad about each of these foods.

Step 4 Excel

There are two sayings that may have meaning. The first is "You are what you eat" The second saying is "Garbage in Garbage out." These are figures of speech that have deeper meanings than first seemed. What do you think this means? How did this apply to Daniel and how does it apply to you.
Gender Roles

Step 1 Excite

Each of the ancient civilizations had differing views on what the roles of men and women were. Some included the women in their education system some did not.

Step 2 Examine

Research the roles played out by men and women in ancient civilizations. Use the existing resources, Internet or other resources. We recommend the following:

- **Ancient Tablets, Ancient Graves: Accessing Women's Lives in Mesopotamia**
  - **Description** Synopsis of roles, contributions and lives of women in Mesopotamia. Part of the Women In World History Curriculum; upper middle school level.

Step 3 Expand

In a number of his writings, Paul the Apostle cites the special help and role women played in helping his ministry. Christian theology had a major impact on how the gender roles of men and women should be. Equal but different. From the library or other resources, find and read articles about how Christian beliefs have improved the cooperation between male and female.

Step 4 Excel

How do you see the gender roles? Write an article as if for a newspaper on the gender roles as you see them. Is there a difference? Should there be a difference? If so, why? If not, why not? Discuss the roles that your mother and father have in your family.
Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Step 1 Excite

A palace with legendary gardens built on the banks of the Euphrates river by King Nebuchadnezzar II. In his books on history, Diodorus Siculus, a Greek Historian, described the Gardens this way. "The approach to the Garden sloped like a hillside and the several parts of the structure rose from one another tier on tier... On all this, the earth had been piled... and was thickly planted with trees of every kind that, by their great size and other charm, gave pleasure to the beholder... The water machines [raised] the water in great abundance from the river, although no one outside could see it."

Step 2 Examine

Do research to find out about The Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend any of the following:

Books

- Kingfisher Illustrated History of the World
  Read: "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon" pages 71-73.
- First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)
  Read: "The Hanging Gardens" (page 80).
- Kingfisher History Encyclopedia
  Read: "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon" pages 36-37.
- Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World
  Read: "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon" page 76.
- Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery
  Read: "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon" pages 101-102, 133.

Internet Sources

- The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
  Description: One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, middle school level.
- Hanging Gardens of Babylon
  Description: Text and illustrations describing the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.
The Hanging Gardens of Babylon: The Seven Wonders
Description: Describes the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Seven Wonders.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon
Description: A computer generated image of the Gardens during the day and at night.

Step 3 Expand
Using the information from your research, try to describe the garden in your own words. Use neither less than 50 words nor more than 200. In your description, compare the vastness of the Hanging Gardens to the gardens of today.

Step 4 Excel
Diodorus Siculus said that 'great water machines' brought water to the garden. Research Water Hydraulics and draw a water machine to raise water. For example, research Ram Pumps at http://www.animatedsoftware.com/pumpglos/ram_pump.htm. A Ram Pump is a simple two piece hydraulic pump used to raise water to great heights.
Hammurabi Code

Step 1 Examine

Brainstorm and make a list of at least 15 basic laws you believe are found in most countries today.

Step 2 Examine

In smaller groups of hunter/gatherers, everyone knew and trusted each other. The leaders could easily make decisions when problems arose. As cities grew larger, the people needed consistent and fair laws.

King Hammurabi of the Babylonian Empire reigned between 1,800 B.C. and 1,760 B.C. The Code of Hammurabi is a collection of the laws and edicts of this king. A copy of the code, etched on a block of black diorite nearly 2.4 m (8 ft.) high, was discovered by a team of French archaeologists at Susa, Iraq, in 1902. The people of Babylonia believed Hammurabi received the law from the sun god Shamash. The code itself, composed of 28 paragraphs, seems to be a series of amendments to the common law of Babylonia rather than a strict legal code.

Do research about Hammurabi's law. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent
Read: "Government, Society, and Law" (pages 26-31).

First Civilizations (Cultural Atlas for Young People)
Read: "Law and Society" (pages 56-57).

Of Codes and Crowns: The Development of Law by Constitutional Rights Foundation. Law and World History Series.
Description Background information and activities on the development of law and legal systems from ancient times to the Renaissance. Reading level: 12 and up. An entire section is devoted to Hammurabi's Law Collection. Los Angeles: Constitutional Rights Foundation, 1983.

Description This curriculum guide has good activity ideas that can readily be adapted for middle-school use. Some of the background information is dated and does not reflect the latest research. University of California at Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, 1991.
Step 3 Expand

Some point to the law code of King Hammurabi of Babylon as the supposed actual source of the laws given by Moses. Hammurabi is believed to have lived about 150 years before Moses wrote the laws of Israel. Far from being merely copied from Hammurabi's code, the Mosaic law stands far superior to that of Hammurabi. Concerning this, the noted Joseph Plessis wrote: "It does not appear that the Hebrew legislator made any use of the various codes of Babylonia and Assyria. Nothing in his work can be proved to have been borrowed. Although there are interesting similarities, they are not such that they cannot be easily explained by the codifying of customs shared by people with a common origin." (Supple'ment au Dictionnaire de la Bible) Also W. J. Martin tells us: "Despite many resemblances, there is no ground for assuming any direct borrowing by the Hebrew from the Babylonian. Even where the two sets of laws differ little in the letter, they differ much in the spirit. For example, in the Hammurabi Code, theft and receiving stolen goods were punished by the death penalty (Laws 6 and 22), but in Israel's laws the punishment was compensation. (Exodus 22:1; Leviticus 6:1-5) Whereas the Mosaic law forbade handing over an escaped slave to his master (Deuteronomy 23:15, 16), the Babylonian laws punished by death anyone taking in a fugitive slave. -- Laws 15, 16, 19." (Thomas, 1958)

The Code of Hammurabi would have one display a spirit of vengeance, whereas the Hebrew law tells us: You must not hate your brother in your heart.... You must not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am Yahweh (Leviticus 19:17, 18).

Make a comparison chart between The Code of Hammurabi and biblical law.

Step 4 Excel

Law is useless without God, and Babylonia was cursed for its idolatry. Read Psalm 14:4-26. The law of God is: "perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether (Ps. 19:7-9)." Read and copy the following Bible verses for your portfolio. Psalm 19:7-9; Psalm 119:1-8; and Proverbs 28: 4-5.
Literature

Step 1 Examine

The literature that has survived from Mesopotamia was written primarily on stone or clay tablets. The production and preservation of written documents were the responsibility of scribes who were associated with the temples and the palace. A sharp distinction cannot be made between religious and secular writings. The function of the temple as a food redistribution centre meant that even seemingly secular shipping receipts had a religious aspect. In a similar manner, laws were perceived as given by the gods. Accounts of the victories of the kings often were associated with the favour of the gods and written in praise of the gods. The gods were also involved in the establishment and enforcement of treaties between political powers of the day. (Britannica.com Inc.)

Step 2 Examine

Gilgamesh was one of the most heroic priest-kings of this time. He was the priest-king of Uruk which was located on the Euphrates River approximately fifty miles northwest of Ur. The oldest written story in the world delineates Gilgamesh's legendary deeds. In the story, Gilgamesh is characterized as being both human and divine. Gilgamesh and his companion Enkidu travel the world performing heroic acts.

Do research about Gilgamesh. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

- **Gilgamesh Man's First Story** by Bernarda Bryson
  

- **The Great Deeds of Superheroes** by Maurice Saxby, and Robert Ingpen.
  
  
  **Description:** Illustrated retelling of epic tales ranging from Gilgamesh to the heroes of medieval Europe. Introduction offers a summary of the themes common to epics of all eras and cultures.

- **The Last Quest of Gilgamesh** by Ludmilla Zemen Montreal: Tundra Books, 1995
  
  **Description:** Superb illustrations and a simplified text make the Gilgamesh story accessible to all readers.
Magazine

*Calliope: World History Magazine for Young People*, Epic Heroes Issue.

**Description** The Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh is featured in this issue, which also includes information and activities on heroes from other ancient cultures. Peterborough, New Hampshire: Cobblestone Publishing, January/February 1991.

Internet Sources

"Storytelling, the Meaning of Life, and *The Epic of Gilgamesh*"

**Description** Synopsis of Gilgamesh.

Epic of Gilgamesh from Creighton University at http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/worldlit/lit/gilga.html

**Step 3 Expand**

Take a look at some of the other writings occurring around the time of these civilizations. Daniel for example was written by Daniel the Prophet during his captivity. Much about the people and times can be learned from Daniel. Read the book of Daniel.

The books of Esther, Ezra, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Lamentations were also written during the time of these civilizations.

**Step 4 Excel**

Read the book of Esther. From your studies, discuss the different ways that the Hebrews wrote about the area of their captivity and the ways that the people of Babylon and Assyria wrote.
Medicine

Step 1 Excite

Brainstorm and discuss what you think would happen if you were sick in ancient Mesopotamia. Could you go to a doctor? What if you broke your leg? What if you had a toothache? What remedies do you think were used for colds and the flu? Who attended the birth of babies?

Step 2 Examine

Two kinds of specialists dealt with disease in ancient Mesopotamia: the ashipu practiced magic and the asu was a physician who prescribed practical remedies.

Using the resources available, study the ancient forms of medicine. The use of herbs and other plants have long been used in the practice of medicine. In fact, many of the modern medicines we use daily started out as 'poultices', 'plasters' and 'potions'.

What type of surgery was practiced? What are some of the herbs and plants used in making the medicines and cures for the common diseases experienced in the Mesopotamia Civilizations? What are some of the modern medicines that have come about because of Mesopotamian medicines? Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, a historical novel, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

- **Medicine Though TIme**
  - Description: This is a very Informative site from the BBC. Read through the Prehistory & Ancient World sections: Disease & its Treatment, Anatomy & Surgery, Hospitals & Training, Public Health, and Alternatives to Medicine.

- **Medicine in Ancient Mesopotamia**
  - Description: Includes information about concepts and understanding of disease and medicine

- **The Magic of Babylon II: Herbal Magic & Medicine**
  - Description: An description of herbs used as medicine, and assisting in diagnosis in Mesopotamia.

Step 3 Expand

Write a short story about someone ill or hurt in ancient Mesopotamia. Focus on the character. Include details of his disorder, and the remedy. Refer to Writing a Short Story in *Writers INC*.

Step 4 Excel

Make a list and compare the uses of the different forms of medicines in ancient Mesopotamia and modern medicine.
Religion

Step 1 Excite

There were a vast number of gods, spirits and demons in Mesopotamian religion, reputedly nearly two thousand of them. In their normal everyday life most inhabitants of the region felt themselves to be surrounded by a host of supernatural forces, both good and bad; a belief that is revealed in a vast number of surviving incantations and counter-incantations.

Step 2 Examine

Do research about religion in ancient Mesopotamia. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

- **Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent**
  
  Read: "Religion and Mythology" (pages 37-41).

- **Kingfisher History Encyclopedia**
  
  Read: Religion in the Ancient World. Look in the index under "Religion."

- **Ancient Civilizations**
  
  Read: There is very little about religion in this book. Scan through the first few pages to read snippets about religion.

- **Usborne's Illustrated Ancient World**
  

- **Streams of Civilizations: Earliest Times to Discovery**
  

Internet Sources

- **Ancient Mesopotamia**
  
  Description Overview of History of Mesopotamia including religion practices.

- **The Divine World**
  
  Description Sketch of religion in Mesopotamia.
Who were the gods and the heroes of the Babylonians then?

**Description** Summaries of each of the following: the older gods, the younger Anunnaki and Igigi, the chthonic gods, the heroes and monsters.

**Mesopotamian Deities**

**Description** About.com explores Mesopotamian, Sumerian, and Babylonian deities and mythology.

**Step 3 Expand**

From your research of the religions of Assyria, Babylon, Canaan and Sumeria, write an essay on the comparison of the roles the four major gods played in each Civilization.

**Step 4 Excel**

The nation of Israel was often tempted and fell into the trap of worshipping these gods instead of the only Living True God. Molech for example is referred to in the Bible (Lev 8 and 20). Also, Baal and Ashtoroth are referenced in the Bible (Numbers, Judges and Kings). Use the Bible Study Aids in the Research Area to study what God has to say about these gods. What other gods are spoken about in the Bible? Discuss with your parents why you think that the Israelites were so tempted they fell away from worshipping the true and living God to worship idols and false gods.
Science and Technology

Step 1 Excite

Brainstorm and discuss the inventions and discoveries that may have come from ancient Mesopotamia. Think about daily life in this time period. It is said, "Necessity is mother of invention." What problems occurred in daily life that triggered inventions.

Step 2 Examine

The first writing (a system of pictographs), a lunar calendar, the wheel, and early bronze work are all from Ancient Mesopotamia. The use of the number 12 (and multiples of 12) as applied to time and degrees comes to us from the Sumerians, along with the dozen as a common measure.

Mathematics

We use a mathematical system based on 10 and we have a unit called zero. Try adding, subtracting and multiplying with a zero. 10 times 10 equals 100. To the Babylonians math was much different. They had a base number of 60, but had no zero.

Calendar

We owe much of our calendar system to the Babylonians. They were probably the first people after the Sumerians to have a calendar. This calendar was very important because without it agriculture could not be planned properly.

There were twelve lunar months in the year but as the months were shorter than our months often an extra month would have to be added. This was called the second Elul. Each week was divided into seven days. The day was divided into six parts each of two hours duration and containing thirty parts. The Babylonians measured time with a water or sun clock. One can see from this that the Babylonian calendar has marked similarities with our own: for instance the twelve months in the year and seven days in a week. (Butterley)
Do research to find out about contributions of the Sumerians and science in Mesopotamia. Use any resource (encyclopedia, a non-fiction book, or the Internet). We recommend the following:

Books

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent

Read: "Science and Technology" (pages 54-57).

Science in Ancient Mesopotamia (Science of the Past) by Carol Moss

Description Describes the enormous accomplishments of the Sumerians and Babylonians of ancient Mesopotamia in every scientific area, a heritage which affects our own everyday lives Reading level: Ages 9-12 School & Library Binding (September 1998) Franklin Watts, Incorporated; ISBN: 0531203646

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent By: Pilbeam, Mavis

Description Describes ancient Mesopotamia, now located in present-day Iraq, and traces its history, technological innovations, people, and culture from 10,000 to 539 B.C.

Internet Source

Babylonian and Egyptian mathematics

Step 3 Expand

Choose one of the contributions to write about. Write an explanation (minimum 200 words) showing how one of the inventions above led to devices we use today.

Step 4 Excel

Make a display (use a poster and colored pencils or markers with illustrations of scientific and technological contributions from Mesopotamia.)