HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY
STUDENT BOOK

6th Grade | Unit 2
# HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 602

## The Cradle of Civilization

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The Cradle of Civilization

Introduction

The Old Stone Age, in which man hunted and gathered food, fascinates us. The New Stone Age, in which man learned to farm and raise animals, is exciting. In this LIFEPAC®, however, we are concerned primarily with the time when man began to dwell in cities and to communicate in writing. We shall study Mesopotamia, Israel, and Egypt from about 3500 B.C.

Objectives

Read the following objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAC, you should be able to:

1. Name some features of the geography of Mesopotamia.
2. List some reasons for constant warfare among early civilizations.
3. Describe the cultures and religions of the Mesopotamian civilizations.
4. Name contributions made by each of the civilizations of Mesopotamia.
5. Describe the geography, religion, and history of Israel.
6. Name some contributions made by Israel.
7. Describe the geography, religion, and history of Egypt.
8. Name some contributions made by Egypt.
Survey the LIFEPAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

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1. MESOPOTAMIA

In your study of world geography you learned that geographical factors affect the way of life in a given area. In this LIFEPAC you will see how civilization itself depended on the discovery of the rich soil in the Fertile Crescent.

Section Objectives

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Name some features of the geography of Mesopotamia.
2. List some reasons for constant warfare among early civilizations.
3. Describe the cultures and religions of the Mesopotamian civilizations.
4. Name contributions made by each of the civilizations of Mesopotamia.

Vocabulary

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

**astrology** (u strol u jē). Study of the influence of the stars and planets on a person's future.

**burial** (ber' ē ul). Putting a dead body in a grave; burying.

**cremate** (krē māt). To burn a dead body to ashes instead of burying the body.

**cuneiform** (kyu nē u fôrm). Wedge-shaped characters used in the writing of ancient civilizations.

**dowry** (dou rē'). Money or property that a woman brings to her husband when she marries him.

**Mesopotamia** (mes u pu tā mē u). The land along and in between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

**shaduf** (shä düf). A long rod with a bucket on one end and a weight on the other end used for raising water.

**ziggurat** (zig' ā rat). An ancient temple in the shape of a pyramid with an outside staircase.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: **hat, āge, căre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, Ice; hot, ēpen, ērder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rūlē; child; long; thin; /TH/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /l/ represents /əl/ in about, /el/ in taken, /l/ in pencil, /oʊ/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.**
THE FERTILE CRESCENT

Along and between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in southwestern Asia was a fertile land called Paddan-Aram (pae dun ae rum) in Biblical times. We call this area Mesopotamia, which is its Greek name. The rich soil began north of the Persian Gulf and extended to Turkey in the north. It followed the eastern coast of the Mediterranean and the Nile River in Africa. Its shape was that of a half-moon or crescent.

Thousands of years before Christ was born, farmers discovered this rich soil and moved into the valleys. With the warm climate, rich soil, and sufficient water, the lives of farmers became less difficult. With more settled lives, these early men had time to learn how to write, to trade, to use metal, and to live in villages.

Because of the rich, open, flat land, many other tribes continued to invade the Fertile Crescent. There were numerous wars and constant changes in the boundaries of countries.

In 3100 B.C. the southern part of Mesopotamia was called Sumer (soo mur) and the north was called Akkad. Sumer was divided into city-states ruled by priests and kings. The names of the city-states were Ur, Erech (er ek), Lagash (la gash), Larsa (lar sah), and Nippur (nih poor). Sargon I of Akkad captured and united these city-states.

Ur was the city in which Abraham lived. The ruins of this city are seen today in southern Iraq. At one time Ur was the capital of Mesopotamia. It was rebuilt in 650 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar II. We see the effects of geography again: When the course of the Euphrates River was changed, the city became part of the desert.

Sargon I of Akkad captured the city-states, one by one, and built a great empire, which he ruled from 2334-2279 B.C. He established trade with other lands and started the military tradition of Mesopotamia.
Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1.1 Where is the Fertile Crescent? _________________________________________________________________

1.2 What is the Biblical title for Mesopotamia? ______________________________________________________

1.3 Why were there constant wars in Mesopotamia? __________________________________________________

1.4 What country was in southern Mesopotamia? ______________________________________________________

1.5 What country was in northern Mesopotamia? ______________________________________________________

1.6 Who conquered all the states? _________________________________________________________________

1.7 What Biblical character lived in Ur? ______________________________________________________________

1.8 What happened to Ur in later years? ______________________________________________________________

1.9 Why was the Fertile Crescent easy land to invade? ________________________________________________

1.10 The men of Mesopotamia learned how to _______________________________________________________

SUMER

Sumer, under Sargon the Great, was a great civilization which influenced all the later conquerors of Mesopotamia. Characteristics of this civilization became part of modern man’s knowledge because of the type of houses that were built.

The first houses of the Sumerians were built of bundles of reeds which were plentiful. Later the houses were built of mud bricks because clay was abundant. When the floods came the houses collapsed. Then the Sumerians rebuilt on the ruins. Centuries later, when the archaeologists dug beneath them, these mounds yielded treasures to scholars.

Food consisted of vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish, all of which were eaten with fingers instead of forks. Carrots, peas, onions, and walnuts were well-liked as were melons, figs, and grapes. The most common fruit was the date. The Sumerians made bread of dates and honey for the rulers; the poor ate bread made of barley. Both wild and domestic animals, including pigs, cattle, goats, and buffaloes, were eaten.

The Sumerians believed in many gods. Anu, their favorite, represented authority. Inanna was the goddess of love and war. In the temples gods were given drink and shelter and were worshiped by the people. Music was provided by singing accompanied by a flute. The Sumerians believed in sin, magic, and eternal life.

In the arts, the Sumerians used many designs. The arch, dome, vault, and ziggurat step-ups were used in construction. Wall paintings, pottery, and beautiful seals on cylinders for stamping items were found in Sumer.

In science, salt was used for healing purposes because, oddly enough, the Sumerians did not rely on the gods for medicine! In mathematics both multiplication and division were used, and geometry was applied in computing angles. Twelve two-hour periods were in the Sumerian’s day. The Sumerians had the wheel, metals, and a system of weights and measures. However, they had no system of coins.

Sumerian writing, which reads from right to left, is the oldest example of writing on earth. Although pictures were first used, symbols were later made to represent syllables. Triangular or wedge-shaped reeds were used to write on moist clay. This kind of writing is called cuneiform. The Sumerians wrote down their laws, wills, stories, and daily records, and even had libraries of clay tablets!

The Sumerians also established the first schools. Because a fee was paid, only the well-to-do could attend. Under the guidance of a strict male teacher the children learned to write many lists of words and memorized many facts.

The advanced Sumerian civilization continued to influence the world because of the excellent education of the young who maintained the skills. Finally, however, about 1900 B.C., the Sumerians were overthrown by the Amorites and the Elamites.
BABYLONIA

From about 1900 to 730 B.C., all Mesopotamia was conquered and ruled by the Amorites and Elamites, who were Semites (sem ites) from Arabia. They formed a new union called Babylonia (bab uh loa nee uh).

The Babylonians were the first people to write from left to right. They made many written documents. In 1800 B.C., under their great leader, Hammurabi (ham uh rah bee), a famous code of laws was written on an eight-foot piece of stone which can be seen today in the Louvre (lu vrü) (a museum) in Paris, France. Hammurabi’s Code contains 280 judgments and is the most-quoted document written in cuneiform. Business and marriage laws were part of this code. Some of the subjects treated were contracts, theft, slaves, stolen goods, and insurance. The family was protected by laws concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The bridegroom had to pay a price to his father-in-law for the bride. The bride had to bring a dowry, which went to the children when she died or to her father if she were childless. Only written contracts made a marriage legal. Since adopting children was common, the rights and duties of the adopted were documented.

Justice was defined in Hammurabi’s Code. Whereas the Sumerian punishments had not been harsh, the Babylonian law was severe. If witnesses to a crime did not agree, trial by water was often used to decide guilt. The death penalty was given for theft, murder, and other crimes.
Complete the following activities.

1.20 The new country was called ___________________________.

1.21 The first, most complete set of written laws was the ___________________________.

1.22 Where is the stone that the laws were written on today? __________________________________________________________________________

1.23 How were marriages made legal? __________________________________________________________________________

1.24 What kind of writing was used by the Babylonians? __________________________________________________________________________

| A Ziggurat
The capital of this new country was Babylon (bab uh lahn) which meant the Gate of the Gods. From there Nebuchadnezzar I ruled for twenty-one years (1124 to 1103 B.C.).

The houses in Babylon were split-level structures. The roofs were open and, on hot nights, the family slept there. The living rooms, the dining rooms, and the kitchens were located downstairs. Water was drawn from a well. Lamps in the courtyard burned olive oil. Every house had a chapel for burial services and worship ceremonies. Because Mesopotamia had only clay for use in building, the strong wooden supports for the houses were imported from Lebanon (leb ŭ nun). Eventually, the wealthy baked their bricks and improved the strength of the structures.

Like the Sumerians, the Babylonians ate vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish. They also ground grain and made bread. They enjoyed toasting and eating the locusts which destroyed many crops.

The religion of the Babylonians was much like that of the Sumerians. The god Inaana became Ishtar. Marduk was the most powerful god. The sun god was Shamark. The dead were buried in cemeteries with supplies for the afterlife, although some of the dead were cremated.

Temples were built for their gods. There the children went to school and the people worshiped. The temples were ziggurats or terraced pyramids. The base was the largest platform. The next layer was smaller; and the third, still smaller. One ziggurat in Ur was seventy feet high (twenty-one meters). In these temples, throbbed the hearts of the cities. There were butchers, bakers, entertainers, and scribes who wrote (in cuneiform style) for those who could not. Sometimes the temples were protected by walls.

Art flourished in Babylon. Beautiful vessels ornamented with gold were buried with the kings. Literature of the time dealt with floods which were thought to be caused by sin. Other stories were written about the journey of Abraham.

Science continued to improve. Both astronomy and astrology developed, and a calendar was made.

Life in Babylon was rich and full. Peace prevailed. Little thought was given to wartime needs or to the best way to protect the city. As a result, Babylon was overthrown in 730 B.C. by the Assyrians (uh sir ee unz) and Kassites (kas ites). This great civilization was then brought to an end.

Select the correct answer. Underline the answer you choose.

1.25 Houses on hillsides today are often built like the Babylonian houses which were one-story. split-level. two or three stories.

1.26 The temples in which the Babylonians worshiped were flat structures. round churches. ziggurats.

1.27 A science that developed during this time was mathematics. astronomy. medicine.

1.28 Babylonians obtained wood for building from their forests. Lebanon. Israel.

1.29 The Babylonians believed in one god. many gods. our God.
ASSYRIA

Assyria, as the conquered land was called, rose to its height from 669 to 624 B.C. The greatest leader was Ashurbanipal (ah shur bah ni pahl), who formed a library at Nineveh, supported the arts, and put down an Egyptian uprising.

Nineveh, the capital, became a splendid city built with stones and brick. The palace was decorated with glazed tiles of gorgeous colors. The world’s first aqueduct was built there. Many tall temples dotted the landscape. All the riches of Babylonia were placed in Nineveh.

Unlike the Babylonians, the Assyrians were a war-loving people. They used war chariots and iron weapons. When they attacked a city, they first dug under the walls, and then used a battering ram to knock down the weakened remains. These warriors treated their captives cruelly. The Assyrians often removed the conquered people from their homelands to other areas. With fewer people remaining, a country could not easily rebel.

Nevertheless, great art flourished. Their sculpture and pottery were beautiful and temples were decorated with great stone carvings. Animals were drawn in great detail.

Trade, too, went on during this period. The Assyrians bred and sold horses, which they traded in Asia Minor for raw materials. They obtained tin from Iran and wood from Lebanon. New trade routes were needed from time to time, and this fact caused war.

Agriculture played a big role in Assyria. Corn, vegetables, meat, leather, horns, fish, dates, and reeds were among the products exported.

The Assyrians, who believed in many gods, also thought the dead should be given food and
other necessary things for the afterlife. The dead were often buried under floors in stone coffins with lamps to offset the gloom of death. Laws did not protect the helpless, the weak, or the women. Punishments were based on the rule of “an eye for an eye.” Women, who had been treated with respect under the laws of Babylonia, were now harshly treated. Men could leave their wives without any settlement, and still worse they could cripple or kill their wives if they wished.

The last good ruler, Kar-Tukulti Ninurta (kar too cul tih ni nur tuh), was killed by his own son. After that, Assyria declined. Although for a long time no one could defeat the Assyrians, the Chaldeans (kal dee unz) finally did conquer them. Nineveh was captured and destroyed in 612 B.C. by a combined force of Chaldeans, Medes, and Scythians. In 605 B.C. this ancient land came to be ruled by the Chaldeans.

Answer each question.

1.30 Why do you think the Assyrians defeated the Babylonians? ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

1.31 Why would most women choose to live in Sumer rather than Assyria? ______________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

1.32 What animal was important in wartime? ________________________________

1.33 Why were the conquered taken for their homeland? ________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

1.34 If no iron was in Mesopotamia, how do you think the Assyrians obtained this metal? ______
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
SELF TEST 1

Put an X on the line in front of each statement that describes the geography of Mesopotamia (each correct answer, 4 points).

1.01  ______ fertile land
      ______ open, flat land
      ______ cold and barren
      ______ rocky soil
      ______ rich soil
      ______ between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
      ______ mountainous
      ______ sufficient water

Write the letter of the correct answer on the blank (each answer, 3 points).

1.02  ______ Which early civilization used wall paints and pottery in its arts?
     a. Persia  b. Sumer
1.03  ______ Which civilization believed in the divine right of kings?
     a. Persia  b. Sumer
1.04  ______ Which early civilization was noted for its code of laws?
     a. Babylonia  b. Assyria
1.05  ______ Which civilization, although warlike, was quite interested in such art works as decorated temples and stone carvings?
     a. Babylonia  b. Assyria
1.06  ______ Which civilization believed in power and built three walls around Babylon?
     a. Persia  b. Chaldea
1.07  ______ Which title indicates any king of ancient Egypt?
     a. Shaduf  b. Pharaoh
1.08  ______ Which word means an ancient temple in the shape of a pyramid with an outside staircase?
     a. ziggurat  b. obelisk
Match the civilization with its contribution. Write the name of the civilization on the blank. Choose from the civilizations listed below (each answer, 3 points).

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<th>Chaldea</th>
<th>Persia</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.09 unsurpassed fabrics</td>
<td>a. ____________________________</td>
<td>b. ____________________________</td>
<td>c. ____________________________</td>
<td>d. ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>world’s first aqueduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>plow with a metal tip</td>
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<tr>
<td>developed astronomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>established the first schools</td>
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</table>

Put an X on the line in front of the statement that best tells why civilizations fought for control of Mesopotamia (this answer, 4 points).

1.010 ______ They did not like the people of other tribes.
       ______ They wanted to improve the arts in other countries.
       ______ They were interested in the rich farmland of the Fertile Crescent.

Complete these statements (each answer, 4 points).

1.011 When man learned to write, to use metals, and to work with others, we say he became ____________________________.

1.012 Abraham, a patriarch of the Bible, lived in the city-state of ____________________________.

1.013 Sumerian houses were built of ____________________________.

1.014 Cuneiform was the type of ____________________________ the ancients had.

1.015 Hammurabi of Babylonia made the most complete ____________________________.

1.016 Temples were built in the shape of ____________________________.

1.017 Modern homes are often built in the style of the houses of Babylonia. The style is called ____________________________.

1.018 Nebuchadnezzar II will probably be remembered by most people for the building of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, called ____________________________.