

Mesopotamia and Sumer

- I. The geographic setting
 - A. Mesopotamia
 - 1. Lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
 - 2. Part of Fertile Crescent, which stretches in a crescent shape from the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf
 - B. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers
 - 1. Source of life for peoples of Mesopotamia
 - 2. Floods brought good topsoil, but sometimes brought death and destruction
- II. The first cities
 - A. Independent cities
 - 1. Shared common culture and language
 - 2. Remained politically independent city-states
 - 3. Each city acted as a state with its own god or goddess, government, and king
 - B. Sumerian cities
 - 1. Markets were busy places where goods and services could be acquired
 - 2. Streets were crowded
 - 3. Houses faced inner courtyards, where family life took place
- III. Sumerian religion
 - A. Temples
 - 1. Sites of religious, social, and economic activity
 - 2. Built as ziggurats
 - B. Religious beliefs
 - 1. People believed in many gods, known as polytheism
 - 2. Myths about gods explained people's beliefs
 - C. The gods
 - 1. Gods were honored in ceremonies
 - 2. Music, incense, and food were offered to the gods
 - D. The fall of Sumer
 - 1. City-states fought among themselves
 - 2. City-states conquered and united under King Sargon of Akkadia