

World History: Geography
Unit: Ancient Mesopotamia



The Tigris and Euphrates rivers were the lifeblood of ancient Mesopotamia. These rivers provided water for irrigation, allowing farmers to grow crops in a region that is otherwise arid. The fertile soil created by the rivers' annual flooding made Mesopotamia one of the world's earliest agricultural centers. The rivers also served as major trade routes, connecting the interior of the region to the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The Sumerians, one of the first civilizations in Mesopotamia, developed a complex system of irrigation canals to control the water from the rivers. This system allowed them to grow surplus crops, which supported a growing population and the development of cities like Uruk. The Sumerians also created the first writing system, cuneiform, which was used to record transactions and administrative matters.

The Akkadians, under the leadership of Sargon the Great, unified the Sumerian city-states into a single empire. This empire controlled the entire Tigris-Euphrates valley and extended its influence into the Levant and the Persian Gulf. The Akkadians adopted the Sumerian writing system and contributed to the development of Mesopotamian culture.

The Babylonians, led by Hammurabi, created a powerful empire that ruled Mesopotamia from 1792 to 1750 BCE. Hammurabi is famous for his Code of Laws, one of the earliest and most complete written legal systems. The Babylonians also made significant contributions to mathematics, astronomy, and art. The city of Babylon became a major center of power and culture in the region.

The Assyrians, who ruled from 2331 to 609 BCE, were known for their military prowess and administrative efficiency. They built a vast empire that stretched from the Tigris and Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The Assyrians developed a sophisticated system of roads and communication, and they were the first to use iron weapons and armor.