Mesopotamia

What is the land between the rivers?

Mesopotamia (the land between the rivers, Tigris and Euphrates) also known as the Fertile Crescent.

What led to the rise of civilizations?

Hunter-gatherer groups settled into Mesopotamia over 12,000 years ago. Over time they learned how to plant crops (wheat, barley, and other grains) and raised livestock, birds and fish. Plentiful food led to population growth and villages formed.

What problems developed for farms and cities?

Flooding destroyed crops, killed livestock, and washed away homes. Droughts killed crops and livestock.

How did they control water?

The Mesopotamians irrigated their land. They dug out large storage basins to collect water and connected them to canals which brought the water to the crops in the fields. They also built up the banks to hold back the flood waters.

What was the result of the food surpluses?

New occupations developed. People became crafters, government workers, and religious leaders, which led to government and laws.

What happened with the appearance of cities?

Cities became the political, religious, cultural, and economic centers of civilization.

Who developed the first advanced Society?

3,000 BCE several hundred thousand Sumerians settled in Mesopotamia and settled in a land they called Sumer.

The rise of the Sumerian city-states

* Most Sumerians were farmers and lived in the country
* Center of Sumerian society was in the city
* First cities in Sumer had about 10,000 residents
* By 2,000 BCE the largest cities had more than 100,000 residents
* City-State (city controlling the farmland around it)
  + stronger city-states controlled the larger areas
  + city-states began fighting each other to gain more farmland
  + City-states built strong armies and built walls around their cities for protection

Rise of the Empires

* Akkadians (2300 BCE)
  + Sargon was their first strong ruler
  + First ruler to have a permanent army (used bows and arrows)
  + Established the world’s first empire(different people and territories under a single ruler)
* Babylonians (1800 BCE)
  + King Hammurabi
    - First code of laws
* Hittites and Kassites(1600 BCE)
  + Mastered ironworking (could make stronger weapons)
  + Chariot (wheeled horse drawn cart used in battle)
* Assyrians (1200BCE)
  + Field armies consisted of 50,000 men
  + Calvary
  + Battering rams
  + Boots for their soldiers
* Chaldeans (600 BCE)
  + King Nebuchadnezzar
  + Rebuilt Babylon
  + Hanging Gardens (one of the 10 wonders of the world)
  + Brought back the ideas and culture of the Sumerians

Egypt

1. **Region**  (a large area that shares unique features)
   * The Nile River Valley
     1. A river source in the middle of the desert
     2. Similar to the Mesopotamia with the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
2. **Movement**  (people moving to a better environment)
   * Nomads coming to settling down to raise their own food instead of finding, following, and hunting it.
3. **Human/Environment Interaction** (humans relying/modifying their environment and environment effecting the humans)
   * The Nile’s annual flood
   * The Egyptians building an irrigation system
4. **Location** (naturally protected area)
   * Mediterranean Sea to the North
   * Red Sea to the East
   * vast deserts to the South and West
5. **Place** (described by natural or physical characteristics)
   * The great pyramids of Giza
   * One of the 7 wonders of the ancient world

Early History

* The early people who settled along the Nile River banded together into two main groups.

One group lived around the mouth of Nile River, near the Mediterranean Sea. Their king wore a Red Crown. Their land was called Lower Egypt. The other group lived near the mountains to the South. Their king wore a White Crown. Their land was called Upper Egypt. These two groups had much in common. They spoke the same language. They worshipped the same gods. They had the same culture. But, they did not get along. They were always fighting. Around 3000 BCE, King Menes ruled Upper Egypt. He conquered Lower Egypt. These two groups continued to fight. One day, King Menes had an idea. If the color of a crown was so important, why not invent a new crown?! King Menes created the Double Crown, a mix of white and red.  His idea worked. Both Lower and Upper Egypt respected the Double Crown. They called their land "The Two Lands“ and over time, The Two Lands became known as Egypt.

* Egypt's ancient history covers a huge block of time. Archaeologists noticed something very interesting. They realized that much Egypt's ancient history could be divided into three big blocks of time. In each block, all of the pharaohs behaved in a certain way.  Scientists have named these blocks "The Old Kingdom", "The Middle Kingdom", and "The New Kingdom".
* The old Kingdom (2700 BCE-2200BCE)
  + Pharaohs had absolute power and were considered gods on earth. But that's not why this kingdom is nicknamed "The Pyramid Age".  Pharaohs were buried in pyramids ***only*** during this time period in history.

The Middle Kingdom (2100 BCE -1800 BCE)

* The middle kingdom was Egypt's Golden Age. Trade flourished, arts and literature flourished. Egypt built strong armies to defend herself against her neighbors. During the time period of the middle kingdom, pharaohs were expected to be good kings and wise rulers.
* Instead of building huge expensive pyramids, when pharaohs died, they were buried in hidden tombs. These tombs were all over ancient Egypt. Most probably, there are tombs yet to be discovered by modern archaeologists because they were hidden so well.

The New Kingdom (1500 BCE – 1000BCE)

* The new kingdom was Egypt's expansion period. Egypt expanded her borders through military conquest and became a world power.

During the time period of the new kingdom, pharaohs were all powerful, and pharaohs were all buried in the same geographic area called the Valley of the Kings.