

Name _____

Date _____

Ancient Mesopotamia



Read the paragraph for background information. Then use the map to answer the questions.

Mesopotamia was not a country. In the same way that the Midwest in America refers to a specific group of states, Mesopotamia names a specific region in the fertile crescent. The word means, roughly, "land between two rivers." Mesopotamia was the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Mesopotamians were the people who lived there.

In the beginning, small nomadic groups settled into independent city-states. They built high walls around the cities to protect them from one another. Much of the area around the fertile crescent was desert.

Mesopotamians had access to water with which to grow crops, so they were fortunate compared to the desert nomads. They used their relative prosperity to build beautiful buildings and carve sculptures. They are best remembered for inventing writing. Sumer is credited with being the first city-state to think of recording information on clay tablets. Later, the Assyrians and Babylonians would use writing to record their conquests—and poetry and myths such as the story of Gilgamesh. It is for these reasons and others that Mesopotamia is also known as the birthplace of civilization.

1. Name three cities along the Euphrates River. _____
2. Which one of the Euphrates cities was almost certainly the capital of one of the early empires?

3. Based on the map and the information above, which city is likely to have a greater population: Ashur or Jarmo? Explain. _____
4. List all of the cities shown between the 35th and 40th parallels.

5. List all of the cities shown between the 35th and 40th meridians.

6. Describe the location of the fertile crescent in terms of latitude and longitude.

7. What does the gray area of land represent on the map? Why were Mesopotamians fortunate to live there? _____
8. If a traveler walked straight from one city to the next, which would be a longer journey: from Jerusalem to Ebla or from Thebes to Memphis? _____
9. Which sea is north of the Persian Gulf? _____

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