

2.1

A Civilization Emerges in Sumer



As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Understand how geography influenced the development of civilization in the Fertile Crescent.
- Outline the main features of Sumerian civilization.
- Explain how the advances in learning made by the Sumerians left a lasting legacy for later peoples to build on.

Civilization In Sumer

Fertile Crescent- Area that stretches in an arc from the Persian Gulf to Mediterranean Sea

Two rivers here...**Tigris & Euphrates**

Mesopotamia- “Between the Rivers” region eventually called this

The world’s first civilization was known as the **Sumer**

World Crossroads

**Fertile Crescent known as the
crossroads of the world because its
between Asia, Africa, & Europe**

What does this mean?

***The Epic of Gilgamesh*- Long narrative
poem about a great flood that
destroys the world.**

**People began to develop dams and
irrigations systems, this lead to
governments**

City-States

Successful farms turned into city-states using clay to build them

The wheel was believed to be developed during this time

Ziggurats- Pyramid temples that stood tall in the cities for religion

Trade was developed and people uses rivers or traveled the desert to obtain goods

Government

War leaders would protect the people & soon these people became hereditary rulers

Rulers were in charge of war, taxes, & records

Hierarchy- System of ranking groups, people held power based on importance

Majority of people were peasants, most land belonged to the king.

Slavery began as people captured during war

Religion

**Women held some power &
goddesses were honored in
religion**

**Sumerians were *polytheistic*,
worshiping many gods**

**Believed that highest duty was
keeping gods & goddesses happy
& performed sacrifices**

**At death, they believed you descended
into a grim underworld**

Legacy

Cuneiform- Earliest form of writing making wedge-shaped marks on tablets

Soon other cultures adapted cuneiform for their own languages

Sumerians also developed forms of mathematics and astronomy to make calendars

Pottery & Wagons were developed as well as instruments such as the lyre

Stories were told only through storytelling, later people wrote them down