

## LBD Informational or Explanatory Module

**Module Title:** Development of the First Civilization

**Module Description (overview):** As the population of a civilization shifts, new challenges tend to arise. This common theme of cause-and-effect and solving issues connected to population growth has been existent since the days of the Fertile Crescent. Without a blueprint, the settlers of the Fertile Crescent had to figure out how to deal with these challenges head-on and their decisions set a precedent for future societies. The purpose of this module will be to engage the students in identifying how civilization developed as a result of population growth. In the end, students will be able to make connections to other civilizations that have seen changes as a result of population growth.

Template Task		
Task Number, Type, and Level	Template Prompt	Completed Prompt
Task 11 Informational or Explanatory L1, L2	After researching _____ (informational texts) on _____ (content), write a _____ (report or substitute) that defines _____ and explains _____ (content). Support your discussion with evidence from your research. <b>L2</b> What implications can you draw?	After researching the textbook and secondary resources on Mesopotamia, write a report that defines “civilization” and explains the development of civilization as a result of population growth in Mesopotamia. Support your discussion with evidence from your research. <b>L2</b> What implications can you draw?

Grade(s)/Level: 8th

Discipline: Social Studies

Course: Ancient World History

Author(s): Chad Thomas and Dan Rau

# Student paper 1

## Development of the First Civilization

As a result of population growth in Mesopotamia, a civilization was developed. These early humans were able to thrive due to the geography of Mesopotamia. It was located between two rivers, which provided most of the components for life in the first civilization. From these two rivers, Mesopotamia grew as a civilization and societies with cities, governments, art, religion, class divisions, and a writing system were formed.

The two rivers from which Mesopotamia was started from were called the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. These rivers would flood the area and release silt into the soil. This silt would make the soil fertile, making it perfect to plant and grow crops. Over time, farmers learned how to use irrigation. They could control floods with dams and channels. Once they learned to do this, they had a surplus of food. This surplus of food created a specialization of jobs in Mesopotamia. Among these jobs created were farmers, traders, fishers, merchants, and skilled artisans.

Even in Mesopotamia, certain people were treated differently. After time, the jobs of people created different class divisions in Mesopotamia. These classes consisted of an upper class, middle class, and a lower class. In the upper class were kings, priests, and government officials. The middle class was made up by artisans, merchants, fishers, and farmers. Slaves who worked on farms and in temples made up the lower class. With this specialization of jobs, a writing system was formed. This writing system was called cuneiform and certain people called scribes were the only ones who knew how to use it.

Once cuneiform was created, people in Mesopotamia could record history. Cuneiform was made up of wedge-shaped lines. Scribes would write cuneiform on a wet clay tablet. Once it would dry, they had information to keep permanently. The oldest known story was written in cuneiform and was called The Epic of Gilgamesh. Scribes had to train in schools for a long period of time in order to learn how to write cuneiform. There were over 600 symbols in the alphabet that those humans used. After humans could keep permanent records, a legal system was created.

As more and more people came to Mesopotamia, this legal system was needed. In order to keep the people of Mesopotamia under control, it was split up into provinces called city-states. Some of the first laws included the dismissal of corrupt government officials and laws protecting widows, the elderly, and orphans. Laws for farming were also included. Once a standard set of weights and measures were created, royal scribes carved laws into clay tablets and displayed them through the city.

All of this allowed for Mesopotamia to continue on for many years until it became conquered by the Persians. These early humans were able to use their knowledge to create the first ever civilization. This land would have not provided life for humans unless the population grew as it did. With more people, Mesopotamia was able to develop jobs, a writing system, a legal system, and the ability to trade. It also created other essentials for life in this time. Mesopotamia may not exist anymore, but it will always be remembered as the "land between two rivers."

## Works Cited

Brown, Bryan. "Laying Down the Law." *Junior Scholastic* 109.2 (2006): 16+. Web. 28 Sept 2010. <<http://discoverer.prod.sirs.com>>.

Johnson, Jamie. "The Fertile Crescent and Its Geography." *Associated Content*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Sept 2010.

Landauro, Victor. "Life in Mesopotamia." *Junior Scholastic* 106.1 (2003): 12+. Web. 28 Sept 2010. <<http://discoverer.prod.sirs.com>>.

Spielvogel, Jackson J.. "Journey Across Time The Early Ages." *World History*. Columbus: Glencoe/McGraw Hill, 2008. Print.

# Student paper 2

## Development of the First Civilization

The first known civilization happened near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. A civilization is complex societies with cities, governments, art, religion, class divisions, and a writing system. The water from the rivers was one of the basic necessities of life. Water helped the people grow crops, and as they got more and more crops it became a surplus. All of this food led to population growth because it was enough to feed a lot of people. Also because of so much food the surplus led to specialization of jobs which made it better for selling and trading the food. The place in which they lived was called Mesopotamia.

The rivers flooded and when they did silt was left and made the ground fertile. This is one of the many reasons in Mesopotamia by the rivers was called the Fertile Crescent. Because of the floods from the Tigris and Euphrates the farmers developed irrigation systems. In order to irrigate the farmers made dams and channels. This helped keep the floods under control to keep from over watering or ruining the food before harvest.

The Tigris and Euphrates rivers helped grow so much food it led to specialization of jobs. Specialization of jobs meant not everybody had to be a farmer. One of the most important jobs was being a scribe. Scribes were people who learned how to write. Their writing system had over 600 letters in the alphabet and 60 numbers. It was called cuneiform.

Cuneiform helped the Mesopotamians keep records. The scribes kept records of all major events even the making of laws. The Mesopotamians even developed a seven-day week and made a twelve-month calendar. Scribes were the only people who could read and write. Scribes were mainly men because they were the only ones allowed to go to school to learn. Scribes even wrote stories and songs.

Soon enough the population grew bigger and city-states started to form. One of the first city-states was Sumer. These Sumerian cities even formed their own government. The Sumerian city-states had three different classes based on jobs. The

upper class consisted of kings, priests, and government officials. The middle class consisted of artisans, merchants, fishers, and farmers. The lower class consisted of slaves. The Sumerian cities often fought each other; to protect themselves they built walls around their city-states. Each city-state had a ziggurat, or a grand temple to honor the gods. The Sumerians were polytheistic which means they believed in more than one god.

I can now come to a conclusion that population growth is what made it possible to start a civilization. Civilizations as we know it are complex societies with cities, governments, art, religion, class divisions, and a writing system. That is how the Mesopotamians started. Without the specialization of jobs, the surplus of food, and most definitely the water from the rivers there would be no population growth.

## Works Cited

Brown, Bryan. "Laying Down the Law." *Junior Scholastic* 109.2 (2006): 16+. web. September 28 2010. <<http://discoverer.prod.sirs.com>>.

Johnson, Jamie. "The Fertile Crescent and Its Geography." *Associated Content*. N.p., n.d. Web. September 15 2010.

Landauro, Victor. "Life in Mesopotamia." *Junior Scholastic* 106.1 (2003): 12+. Web. 13 Oct 2010.

Spielvogel, Jackson J.. "Journey across Time The Early Ages." *World History*. Columbus: Glencoe/McGraw Hill, 2008. Print.

## Development of the First Civilization

Ever wondered how our society got so complex today? It all started back then in a place called Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was located in what was then the Fertile Crescent. Everything from cities, organized governments, class divisions, arts and religions, to writing systems started in Mesopotamia.

The cities didn't start off big. At first, there weren't any cities. Mesopotamia got its name "land between two rivers" because it was between two rivers. Thanks to those two rivers (Tigris and Euphrates) it made farming easy. The good farming and fertile land led to large populations, which led to the development of organized civilizations. Soon cities started forming and then even city-states.

Soon the Sumerians invented a writing system called cuneiform. Only a few people were special enough to learn it. They were called scribes. Thanks to the writing system, Sumerians developed the oldest story known to man, The Epic of Gilgamesh. As Sumerians continued to evolve, they soon developed laws using cuneiform.

Laws are rules and as rules people must follow them. Though they were harsh and strict, they kept people in order. There were cruel punishments, but the laws were well respected. Soon a new ruler came named Hammurabi. Hammurabi made a more fair and organized law system called the code of Hammurabi.

Hammurabi's code made it fair for everybody. The code consists of 282 laws. A famous one we might know today is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth meant that the punishments would be equal to the crime done. After Hammurabi's time a new empire came called Assyria.

The Assyrians were powerful and had a fierce army. They built temples called ziggurats to worship the gods. Though they were powerful, they were also cruel. This cruel treatment caused many other empires to rebel against them. One



empire was called the Chaldean empire. The Chaldeans were descendants of the Babylonians in which Hammurabi ruled. Nebuchadnezzar, their king, led the Chaldeans to victory when they rebelled against the Assyrians and captured Nineveh (Assyria's capital). The Chaldeans were skilled workers.

Many of the Chaldeans were artisans (skilled workers) and astronomers. Artisans, scribes, and astronomers were second in class if put into a class division chart. First class would be kings, priests, and government officials. Last would be unskilled workers and slaves. Class divisions were important to ancient Sumerians. It showed where people belonged.

Slowly ancient people climbed their way up to where we are today. That is how our society got so complex. Their way of cities, organized governments, class divisions, arts and religions, and writing systems might have been different from what we have today, but without those beginning steps our society wouldn't of gotten so advanced now.

Brown, Bryan. "Laying Down the Law." *Junior Scholastic* 109.2 (2006): 16+. Web. 13 Oct 2010.

Johnson, Jamie. "The Fertile Crescent + Its Geography." *Associated Content* n. page. Web. 9/15/2010.

Landauro, Victor. "Life in Mesopotamia." *Junior Scholastic* 106.1 (2003): 12+. Web. 13 Oct 2010.

Spielvogel, Jackson. "Journey Across Time the Early Ages." *world history*. Columbus: Glencoe/ McGraw Hill, 2008. Print.

# Student paper 4

10-13-10

Social Studies

Development Of The First Civilization

The first civilization lead to the population growth in Mesopotamia. The empire needed dispend and rules so they have a reason to dispend a person. The cities soon became city-states due to the food razing. They had to create other supplies instead of eating off the floor. There was a way that food was growing water was in soil everywhere.

The citizens came because of the food. There was little of farmers so they had to create other objects like ziggurat the people who made these are called artisans. The people in the civilization also it was the people caring for there family and not being hungry. As the days went on the population grew and more things was created.

Next, how did the population grow in Mesopotamia? The word spread that the civilization had too much food so instead of being hungry the people went there to get the food. They also had good drinking water for farming and many other things people did not have. Would you want to eat on the floor? I would not try to eat on a messy floor.

Over the years and months the civilization grew. More cities were getting turned into city-sates. More of the towns out of Mesopotamia. They new they had to do something about this but when? AS the food was still there the place was getting crowded and there was a lot more things made in Mesopotamia.

The people were tired of living without food. Most people went to the place with food. It got the people and became rich off trade. The people were making the doe and so was the government. The day was coming as fast as they got more land they were taking over by there own people.

The first civilization lead to population growth in Mesopotamia. As soon as the civilization was here it went. There own people rebelled and took over. Never mess with their food system. As soon as they took over they got taking over the civilization fell their food gone what a dreadful day for Mesopotamia. The people were not hurt outside but hurt inside. The other of the cities were taking over they still have a bit of population and not a lot of food. When food started to go down when they left caused a decrees in population. However, the population shrunk after food loss.

Work Cited

Brown, Bryan. "Laying Down the Law." *junior scholastic* 109.2 (2006): 16+. Web. 21 Oct 2010.

Johnson, Jamie. "The Fertile Crescent and Its Geography." *Associated Content* 109.2 (2006): 16+. Web. 15 Oct 2010.

Landauro, Victor. "The Fertile Crescent and Its Geography." *junior scholastic* 106.1 (2003):

"Journey Across Time The Early Ages." *World history Columbus Glencoe/ Mc Graw Hill*(2008): 12+. Web. 22 Oct 2010 12+. Web. 22 Oct 2010.