Mr. Hagler

**Chapter 2 Lesson 1: City States in Mesopotamia**

**Main Idea: The earliest civilization in Asia began in Mesopotamia and organized into city-states.**

**Terms and Names**

Fertile Crescent Curved area of good farm land between the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea

Mesopotamia Area of flat fertile land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers

City-state A city and surrounding land that acts like an independent country

Dynasty Series of rulers from a single family

Cultural Diffusion Process of a new idea, technology, or culture spreads to other cultures

Polytheism The belief in many gods

Empire Several groups of people, nations, or previously independent states controlled

by a single ruler; usually controlled militarily

Hammurabi Babylonian emperor from 1792BCE-1750BCE; ruled Babylon at its peak power.

Developed the world’s first code of laws to rule his empire

**Notes**

Geography of the Fertile Crescent

Fertile Crescent Area of good farm land inside a very dry region; known as Mesopotamia

Tigris/Euphrates Rivers Rivers on either side of Mesopotamia

Flood every year, leaving rich fertile soil to grow many crops

Challenges Flooding is unpredictable, little or no rain could make the area a desert

No natural barriers, villages were defenseless

Resources were limited and scarce

Organizing Solved challenges by creating irrigation ditches to water large area of

crops

Built walls with mud bricks for defense

Traded grain, cloth, tools for other materials like stone, wood, metal

Took organization, leadership, cooperation to solve problems and laws

to settle disputes

Sumerians Create City States

Sumerians One of first groups of people to form a civilization

Had advanced cities, specialized workers, complex institutions, record

keeping, improved technology

City-States By 3000BCE Sumerians built many city-states with crops and shared

Culture; Uruk, Ur, Kish, Umma, Lagash are examples

Priests Early rulers of earliest government because agrarian people believed

success of crops and life depended on their gods. Collected part

of farmers’ earnings in taxes to pay for government

Ziggurat Religious and government building

War Rulers Priests did not lead men into war, led by chosen brave men who lost

power when the war ended. Eventually the war leaders gained

power and became rulers. Rulers would pass power to their sons and form a royal and ruling dynasty.

Spread of Cities Excess or surplus food was sold to make money. Cities grew in wealth

and increased long distance trade. Products and ideas were exchanged with other cultures in the region and beyond.

Sumerian Culture

Many Gods Polytheism: Gods and demons for floods, thunder, sun, crops, etc.

Sumerian Beliefs Sumerians gods were like people and could fight, fall in love, have

children and also get angry and send disasters to humans

To keep gods happy, sacrifices of animals and offerings of wine and food

After Life Gods protected humans in life, but not after. After dying Sumerian

souls went to dismal gloomy place of mud and ash called “Land

of No Return”

Sumerian Society Levels of Society: 1. Kings, landholders, important priests 2. Merchants

3. Farm and shop workers 4. Slaves

Slaves were captured foreigners, Sumerian children sold into slavery to

pay debts

Women could join priesthood and learned to read and write, be

Educated

Science / Technology Sumerians invented the wheel, sail, plow, and used bronze

Math system using base of 60; how we got minutes and degrees

Architecture: columns, ramps, pyramids, ziggurat, arches

Cuneiform: system of writing, first known maps

The First Empire Builders

Series of Rulers City states were often at war, weakening each other. Outside groups

took over but used Sumerian culture as a basis

Sargon of Akkad Akkadians previously adopted many Sumerian practices, took over

northern Mesopotamia and created the world’s first empire.

Controlled from the Mediterranean coast to Iran. Fell to

internal conflict, invasions, and famine

Babylonian Empire 2000BCE nomadic warriors, Amorites. Gradually overwhelmed

Sumerians and established capital at Babylon.

Hammurabi Leader of Babylonians at peak, established first universal law code for

Empire; eye for an eye

**Questions:**

1. How was Sumerian culture spread throughout Mesopotamia and beyond?

2. How did the need to interact with other cultures lead to the advancement of civilization?