

Sargon's Empire, c. 2330 BC



Geography Skills

Place Sargon built the world's first empire by conquering much of the Fertile Crescent.

- 1. Use the Map** How far west did Sargon's empire stretch?
- 2. Draw Conclusions** Why might Sargon have wanted to rule a large area?

ASIA MINOR



BIOGRAPHY



Sargon

(Ruled 2334–2279 BC)

According to legend, a gardener found a baby floating in a basket on a river and raised him as his own child. This baby later became

the Akkadian emperor Sargon. As a young man, Sargon served Ur-Zababa, the king of Kish. Sargon later rebelled against the Sumerian ruler, took over his city, and built Akkad into a military power. He was among the first military leaders to use soldiers armed with bows and arrows. Sargon gained loyalty from his soldiers by eating with them every day.

City-states in Sumer fought each other to gain more farmland. As a result of these conflicts, the city-states built up strong armies. Sumerians also built strong, thick walls around their cities for protection.

Individual city-states gained and lost power over time. By 3500 BC, a city-state known as Kish had become quite powerful. Over the next 1,000 years, the city-states of Uruk and Ur fought for dominance. One of Uruk's kings, known as Gilgamesh, became a legendary figure in Sumerian literature.

Rise of the Akkadian Empire

In time, another society developed along the Tigris and Euphrates. This society was built by the Akkadians (uh-KAY-dee-uhns). They lived just north of Sumer, but they were not Sumerians. They even spoke a different language than the Sumerians.

In spite of their differences, however, the Akkadians and the Sumerians lived in peace for many years.

That peace was broken in the 2300s BC when Sargon sought to extend Akkadian territory. He built a new capital, Akkad (A-kad), on the Euphrates River, near what is now the city of Baghdad. Sargon was the first ruler to have a permanent army. He used that army to launch a series of wars against neighboring kingdoms.

Sargon's soldiers defeated all the city-states of Sumer. They also conquered northern Mesopotamia, finally bringing the entire region under his rule. With these conquests, Sargon established the world's first **empire**, or land with different territories and peoples under a single rule. Sargon's huge empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.

Sumerian Achievements

If YOU lived there...

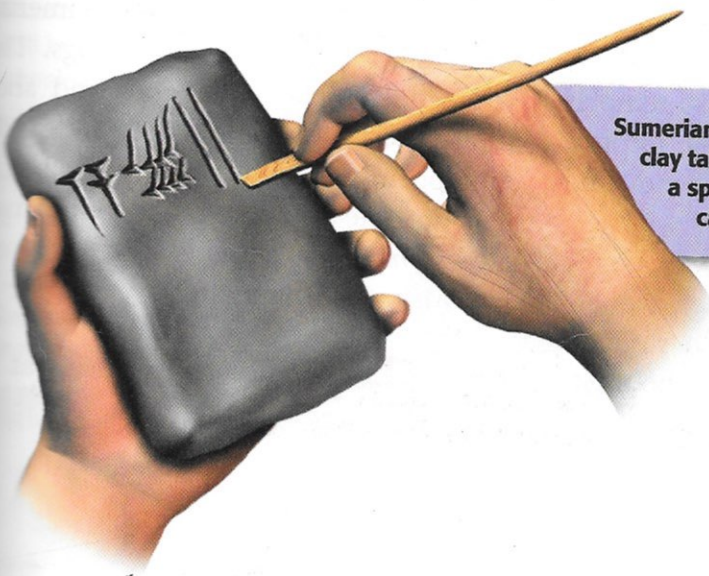
You are a student at a school for scribes in Sumer. Learning all the symbols for writing is very hard. Your teacher assigns you lessons to write on your clay tablet, but you can't help making mistakes. Then you have to smooth out the surface and try again. Still, being a scribe can lead to important jobs for the king. You could make your family proud.

Why would you want to be a scribe?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Sumerian society was advanced in terms of religion and government organization. The Sumerians were responsible for many other achievements, which were passed down to later civilizations.

Invention of Writing

The Sumerians made one of the greatest cultural advances in history. They developed **cuneiform** (kyOO-NEE-uh-fohrm), the world's first system of writing. The Sumerians did not have pens, pencils, or paper, though. Instead, they used sharp tools called styluses to make wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets.



Sumerians wrote on clay tablets with a special tool called a stylus.

SECTION

3

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The Sumerians invented the world's first writing system.
2. Advances and inventions changed Sumerian lives.
3. Many types of art developed in Sumer.

The Big Idea

The Sumerians made many advances that helped their society develop.

Key Terms

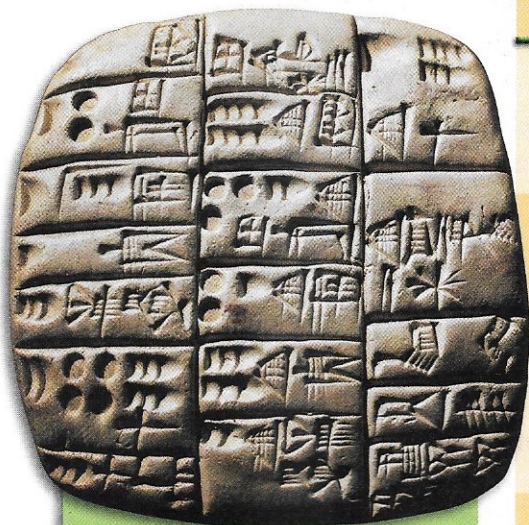
cuneiform, p. 127
pictographs, p. 128
scribe, p. 128
epics, p. 128
architecture, p. 130
ziggurat, p. 130

TAKING NOTES

Create a chart like the one below. As you read, list the achievements and advances made by the Sumerians.

Sumerian Advances and Achievements

Sumerian Advances and Achievements



Sumerian writing developed from early symbols called pictographs. Writers used clay tablets to record business deals, like this tablet that describes a number of sheep and goats.

Development of Writing				
	3300 BC	2800 BC	2400 BC	1800 BC
Heaven				
Grain				
Fish				
Bird				
Water				

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

complex
difficult,
not simple

Earlier written communication had used **pictographs**, or **picture symbols**. Each pictograph represented an object, such as a tree or an animal. In cuneiform, symbols could also represent syllables, or basic parts of words. As a result, Sumerian writers could combine multiple symbols to express more **complex** ideas such as “joy” or “powerful.”

Sumerians first used cuneiform to keep business records. A **scribe**, or **writer**, would be hired to keep track of the items people traded. Government officials and temples also hired scribes to keep their records. Becoming a scribe was a way to move up in social class.

Sumerian students went to school to learn to read and write. Like today, though, some students did not want to study. A Sumerian story tells of a father who urged his son to do his schoolwork:

“Go to school, stand before your ‘school-father,’ recite your assignment, open your schoolbag, write your tablet ... After you have finished your assignment and reported to your monitor [teacher], come to me, and do not wander about in the street.”

—Sumerian essay quoted in *History Begins at Sumer*, by Samuel Noah Kramer

In time, Sumerians put their writing skills to new uses. They wrote works on history, law, grammar, and math. They also created works of literature. Sumerians wrote stories, proverbs, and songs. They wrote poems about the gods and about military victories. Some of these were **epics**, long poems that tell the stories of heroes. Later, people used some of these poems to create *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the story of a legendary Sumerian king.

READING CHECK **Generalizing** How was cuneiform first used in Sumer?

Advances and Inventions

Writing was not the only great Sumerian invention. These early people made many other advances and discoveries.

Technical Advances

One of the Sumerians' most important developments was the wheel. They were the world's first people to build wheeled vehicles, such as carts. Using the wheel, Sumerians invented a device that spins clay as a craftsperson shapes it into bowls. This device is called a potter's wheel.

The plow was another important Sumerian invention. Pulled by oxen, plows broke through the hard clay soil of Sumer to prepare it for planting. This technique greatly increased farm production. The Sumerians also invented a clock that used falling water to measure time.

Sumerian advances improved daily life. Sumerians built sewers under city streets. They used bronze to make strong tools and weapons. They even produced makeup and glass jewelry.

Math and Science

Another area in which Sumerians excelled was math. In fact, they developed a math system based on the number 60. Based on this system, they divided a circle into 360 degrees. Dividing a year into 12 months—a factor of 60—was another Sumerian idea. Sumerians also calculated the areas of rectangles and triangles.

Sumerian scholars studied science, too. They wrote long lists to record their study of the natural world. These tablets included the names of thousands of animals, plants, and minerals.

The Sumerians also made advances in medicine. Using ingredients from animals, plants, and minerals, they produced many healing drugs. Among the items used in these medicines were milk, turtle shells, figs, and salt. The Sumerians catalogued their medical knowledge, listing treatments according to symptoms and body parts.

THE IMPACT TODAY

We still use a base-60 system when we talk about 60 seconds in a minute and 60 minutes in an hour.

READING CHECK Categorizing What areas of life were improved by Sumerian inventions?

CONNECTING TO Technology

The Wheel

Do you realize how much the achievements of ancient Sumer affect your life today—and every day? For example, try to imagine life without the wheel. How would you get around? Look at the streets outside. The cars, trucks, and buses you see are all modern versions of Sumerian wheeled vehicles. Wheelchairs, bicycles, and in-line skates all depend on wheels as well. Even modern air travel owes a debt to the Sumerians. As impressive as jets are, they could never get off the ground without their wheels!

Generalizing Why is the wheel so important to modern society?



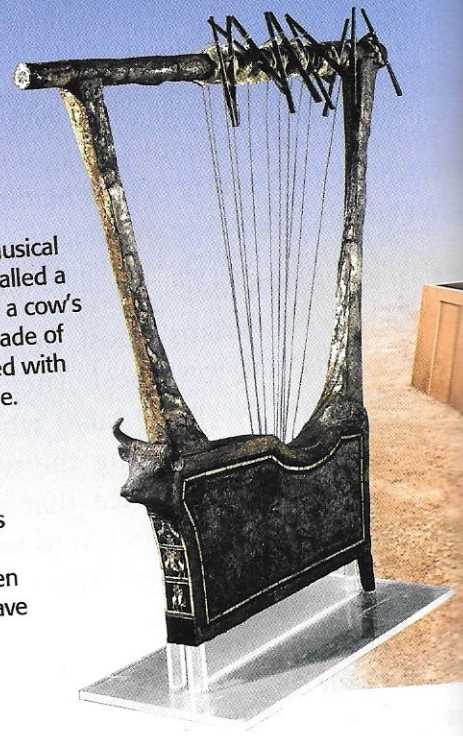
Sumerian Achievements

The Sumerians' artistic achievements included beautiful works of gold, wood, and stone.



This stringed musical instrument is called a lyre. It features a cow's head and is made of silver decorated with shell and stone.

Cylinder seals like this one were carved into round stones and then rolled over clay to leave their mark.



The Arts of Sumer

The Sumerians' skills in the fields of art, metalwork, and **architecture**—the science of building—are well known to us. The ruins of great buildings and fine works of art have provided us with many examples of the Sumerians' creativity.

Architecture

Most Sumerian rulers lived in large palaces. Other rich Sumerians had two-story homes with as many as a dozen rooms. However, most people lived in smaller, one-story houses. These homes had six or seven rooms arranged around a small courtyard. Large and small houses stood side by side along the narrow, unpaved streets of the city. Bricks made of mud were the houses' main building blocks.

City centers were dominated by their temples, the largest and most impressive buildings in Sumer. A **ziggurat**, a pyramid-shaped temple, rose high above each city. Outdoor staircases led to a platform and a shrine at the top. Some temples also had columns to make them more attractive.

FOCUS ON READING

What was a cylinder seal? Describe one in your own words.

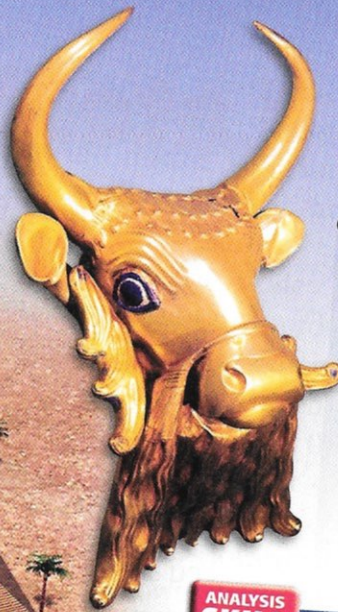
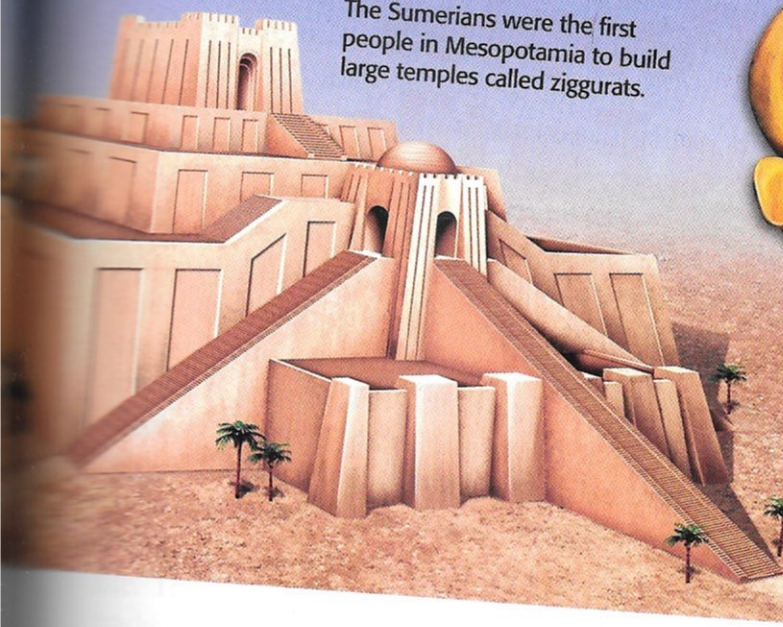
The Arts

Sumerian sculptors produced many fine works. Among them are the statues of gods created for temples. Sumerian artists also sculpted small objects out of ivory and rare woods. Sumerian pottery is better known for its quantity than its quality. Potters turned out many items, but few were works of beauty.

Jewelry was a popular item in Sumer. The jewelers of the region made many beautiful works out of imported gold, silver, and gems. Earrings and other items found in the region show that Sumerian jewelers knew rather advanced methods for putting gold pieces together.

Cylinder seals are perhaps Sumer's most famous works of art. These small objects were stone cylinders engraved with designs. When rolled over clay, the designs would leave behind their imprint. Each seal left its own distinct imprint. As a result, a person could show ownership of a container by rolling a cylinder over the container's wet clay surface. People could also use cylinder seals to "sign" documents or to decorate other clay objects.

The Sumerians were the first people in Mesopotamia to build large temples called ziggurats.



This gold dagger was found in a royal tomb. The bull's head is made of gold and silver.



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

What animal is shown in two of these works?

Some cylinder seals showed battle scenes. Others displayed worship rituals. Some were highly decorative, covered with hundreds of carefully cut gems.

The Sumerians also enjoyed music. Kings and temples hired musicians to play on special occasions. Sumerian musicians played reed pipes, drums, tambourines, and harplike stringed instruments called lyres. Children learned songs in school. People sang hymns to gods and kings.

Music and dance provided entertainment in marketplaces and homes.

READING CHECK

Drawing Inferences What might historians learn from cylinder seals?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW

The Sumerians greatly enriched their society. Next, you will learn about the later peoples who lived in Mesopotamia.

Section 3 Assessment

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- Identify** What is **cuneiform**?
 - Analyze** Why do you think writing is one of history's most important cultural advances?
 - Elaborate** What current leader would you choose to write an **epic** about, and why?
- Recall** What were two early uses of the wheel?
 - Explain** Why do you think the invention of the plow was so important to the Sumerians?
- Describe** What was the basic Sumerian building material?
 - Make Inferences** Why do you think cylinder seals developed into works of art?

Critical Thinking

- Identifying Effects** In a chart like this one, identify the effect of each Sumerian advance you listed in your notes.

Advance/Achievement	Effect

FOCUS ON WRITING

- Evaluating Information** What will you include on your poster to show Sumerian achievements? A ziggurat? A piece of jewelry? A musical instrument? Make a list of the pictures you think would be most interesting to elementary students.

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SK7 HPS

What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. The Babylonians conquered Mesopotamia and created a code of law.
2. Invasions of Mesopotamia changed the region's culture.
3. The Phoenicians built a trading society in the eastern Mediterranean region.

The Big Idea

After the Sumerians, many cultures ruled parts of the Fertile Crescent.

Key Terms and Places

Babylon, p. 132

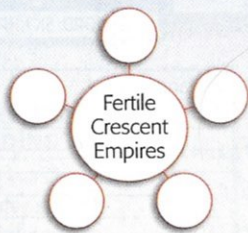
Hammurabi's Code, p. 133

chariot, p. 134

alphabet, p. 137

TAKING NOTES

As you read, use a diagram like the one below to keep track of the later empires of the Fertile Crescent.



Later Peoples of the Fertile Crescent

If YOU lived there...

You are a noble in ancient Babylon, an adviser to the great king Hammurabi. One of your duties is to collect all the laws of the kingdom. They will be carved on a tall block of black stone and placed in the temple. The king asks your opinion about the punishments for certain crimes. For example, should common people be punished more harshly than nobles?

How will you advise the king?

BUILDING BACKGROUND Many peoples invaded Mesopotamia.

A series of kings conquered the lands between the rivers. Each new culture inherited the earlier achievements of the Sumerians. Some of the later invasions of the region also introduced new skills and ideas that still influence civilization today, such as a written law code.

The Babylonians Conquer Mesopotamia

Although Ur rose to glory after the death of Sargon, repeated foreign attacks drained its strength. By 2000 BC, Ur lay in ruins. With Ur's power gone, several waves of invaders battled to gain control of Mesopotamia.

Rise of Babylon

Babylon was home to one such group. That city was located on the Euphrates near what is now Baghdad, Iraq. Babylon had once been a Sumerian town. By 1800 BC, however, it was home to a powerful government of its own. In 1792 BC, Hammurabi (ham-uh-RAHB-ee) became Babylon's king. He would become the city's greatest ruler.

Hammurabi's Code

Hammurabi was a brilliant war leader. His armies fought many battles to expand his power. Eventually, Hammurabi brought all of Mesopotamia into his empire, called the Babylonian Empire after his capital city.

Hammurabi was not only skilled on the battlefield, though. He was also an able ruler who could govern a huge empire. He used tax money to pay for building and irrigation projects. He also brought wealth through increased trade. Hammurabi is best known, however, for his code of laws.

Hammurabi's Code was a set of 282 laws that dealt with almost every part of daily life. There were laws on everything from trade, loans, and theft to marriage, injury, and murder. It contained some ideas that are still found in laws today.

Under Hammurabi's Code, each crime brought a specific penalty. However, social class did matter. For example, injuring a rich man brought a greater penalty than injuring a poor man.

Hammurabi's Code was important not only for how thorough it was but also because it was written down for all to see. People all over the empire could read exactly what was against the law.

Hammurabi ruled for 42 years. During his reign, Babylon became the major city in Mesopotamia. However, after his death, Babylonian power declined. The kings that followed faced invasions from the people Hammurabi had conquered. Before long, the Babylonian Empire came to an end.

READING CHECK Analyzing What was Hammurabi's most important accomplishment?

Primary Source

HISTORIC DOCUMENT

Hammurabi's Code

The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi is credited with putting together the earliest known written collection of laws. The code set down rules for both criminal and civil law and informed citizens about what was expected of them.

- 196. If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.
- 197. If he break another man's bone, his bone shall be broken.
- 198. If he put out the eye of a freed man, or break the bone of a freed man, he shall pay one gold mina.
- 199. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, or break the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value.
- 221. If a physician heal the broken bone or diseased soft part of a man, the patient shall pay the physician five shekels in money.
- 222. If he were a freed man he shall pay three shekels.
- 223. If he were a slave his owner shall pay the physician two shekels.

—Hammurabi, from *The Code of Hammurabi*, translated by L. W. King

ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

How do you think Hammurabi's code of laws affected citizens of that time?



Invasions of Mesopotamia

Several other civilizations developed in and around the Fertile Crescent. As their armies battled for land, control of the region passed from one empire to another.

Hittites and Kassites

A people known as the Hittites built a strong kingdom in Asia Minor, in what is today Turkey. Their success came, in part, from two key military advantages they had over rivals. First, the Hittites were among the first people to master ironworking. This meant they could make stronger weapons than their foes. Second, the Hittite army skillfully used the **chariot**, a wheeled, horse-drawn cart used in battle. Chariots allowed Hittite soldiers to move quickly around a battlefield. Archers riding in the chariots fired arrows at the enemy.

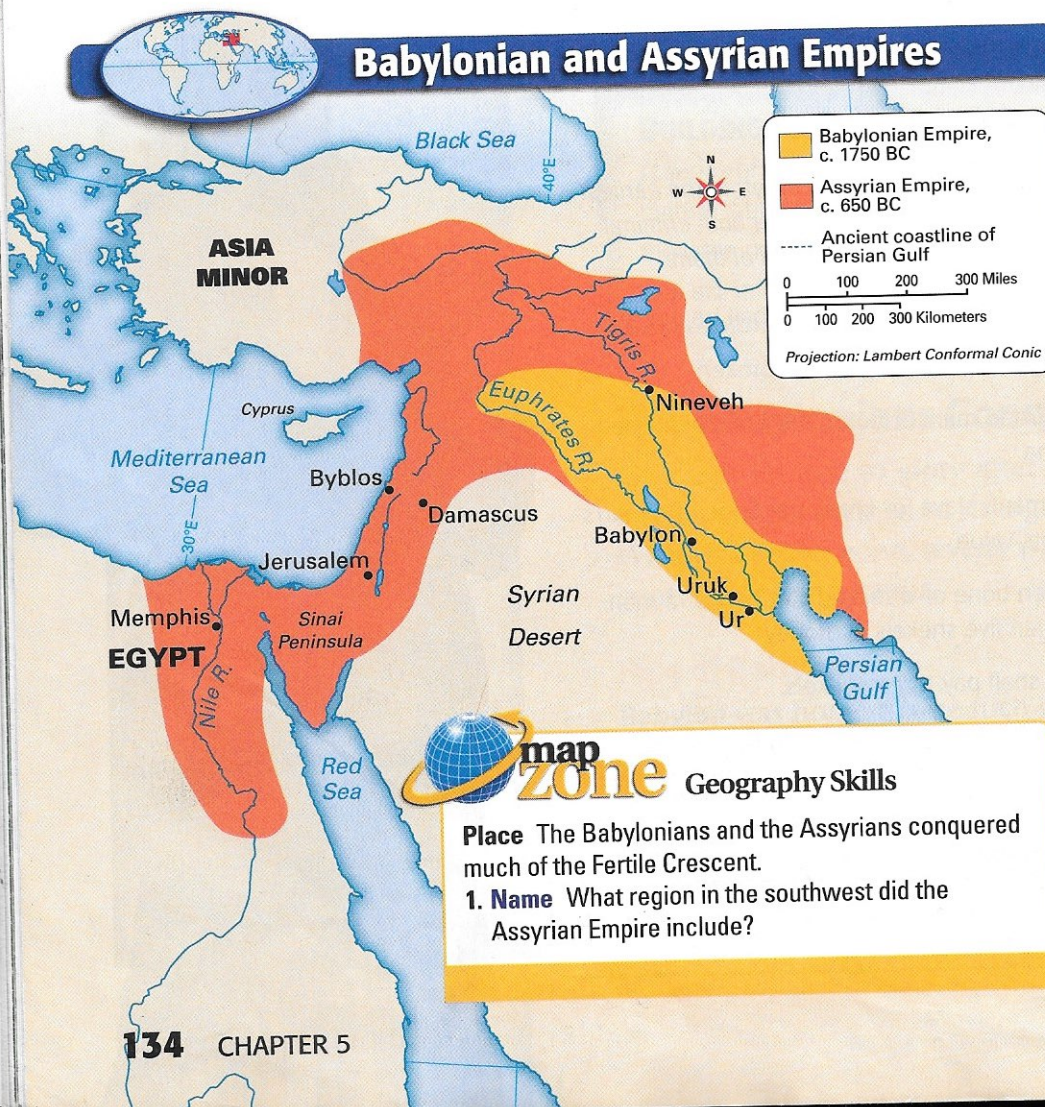
Using these advantages, Hittite forces captured Babylon around 1595 BC. Hittite rule did not last long, however. Soon after taking Babylon, the Hittite king was killed by an assassin. The kingdom plunged into chaos. The Kassites, a people who lived north of Babylon, captured the city and ruled for almost 400 years.

Assyrians

Later, in the 1200s BC, a group called the Assyrians (uh-SIR-ee-unz) from northern Mesopotamia briefly gained control of Babylon. However, their empire was soon overrun by invaders. After this defeat, the Assyrians took about 300 years to recover their strength. Then, starting about 900 BC, they began to conquer all of the Fertile Crescent. They even took over parts of Asia Minor and Egypt.

FOCUS ON READING

Make sure you understand this paragraph by restating it in your own words.



The key to the Assyrians' success was their strong army. Like the Hittites, the Assyrians used iron weapons and chariots. The army was very well organized, and every soldier knew his role.

The Assyrians were fierce in battle. Before attacking, they spread terror by looting villages and burning crops. Anyone who still dared to resist them was killed.

After conquering the Fertile Crescent, the Assyrians ruled from their capital city, Nineveh (NI-nuh-vuh). They demanded heavy taxes from across the empire. Areas that resisted the Assyrians' demands were harshly punished.

Assyrian kings ruled their large empire through local leaders. Each governed a small area, collected taxes, enforced laws, and raised troops for the army. Roads were built to link distant parts of the empire. Messengers on horseback were sent to deliver orders to faraway officials.

Chaldeans

In 652 BC a series of wars broke out in the Assyrian Empire over who should rule. These wars greatly weakened the empire.

Sensing this weakness, the Chaldeans (kal-DEE-unz), a group from the Syrian Desert, led other peoples in an attack on the Assyrians. In 612 BC, they destroyed Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire.

In its place, the Chaldeans set up a new empire of their own. Nebuchadnezzar (neb-uh-kuhd-NEZ-uhr), the most famous Chaldean king, rebuilt Babylon into a beautiful city. According to legend, his grand palace featured the famous Hanging Gardens. Trees and flowers grew on its terraces and roofs. From the ground the gardens seemed to hang in the air.

The Chaldeans greatly admired the ideas and culture of the Sumerians. They studied the Sumerian language and built temples to Sumerian gods.

At the same time, Babylon became a center for astronomy. Chaldeans charted the positions of the stars and kept track of economic, political, and weather events. They also created a calendar and solved complex problems of geometry.

READING CHECK Sequencing List in order the peoples who ruled Mesopotamia.



The Assyrian Army

The Assyrian army was the most powerful fighting force the world had ever seen. Large and well organized, it featured iron weapons, war chariots, and giant war machines used to knock down city walls.

ANALYZING VISUALS What kinds of weapons can you see in this carving?



Phoenicia, c. 800 BC

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Strait of Gibraltar

SPAIN

ATLAS M.

The Phoenicians sailed throughout the Mediterranean, seeking trade goods and founding new cities.

The Phoenicians

At the western end of the Fertile Crescent, along the Mediterranean Sea, was a land known as Phoenicia (fi-NI-shuh). It was not home to a great military power and was often ruled by foreign governments. Nevertheless, the Phoenicians created a wealthy trading society.

Geography of Phoenicia

Today the nation of Lebanon occupies most of what was Phoenicia. Mountains border the region to the north and east. To the west lies the Mediterranean.

The Phoenicians were largely an urban people. Among their chief cities were Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. These three cities, like many Phoenician cities, still exist today.

Phoenicia had few resources. One thing it did have, however, was cedar. Cedar trees were prized for their timber, a valuable trade item. But Phoenicia's overland trade routes were blocked by mountains and hostile neighbors. Phoenicians had to look to the sea for a way to trade.

THE IMPACT TODAY

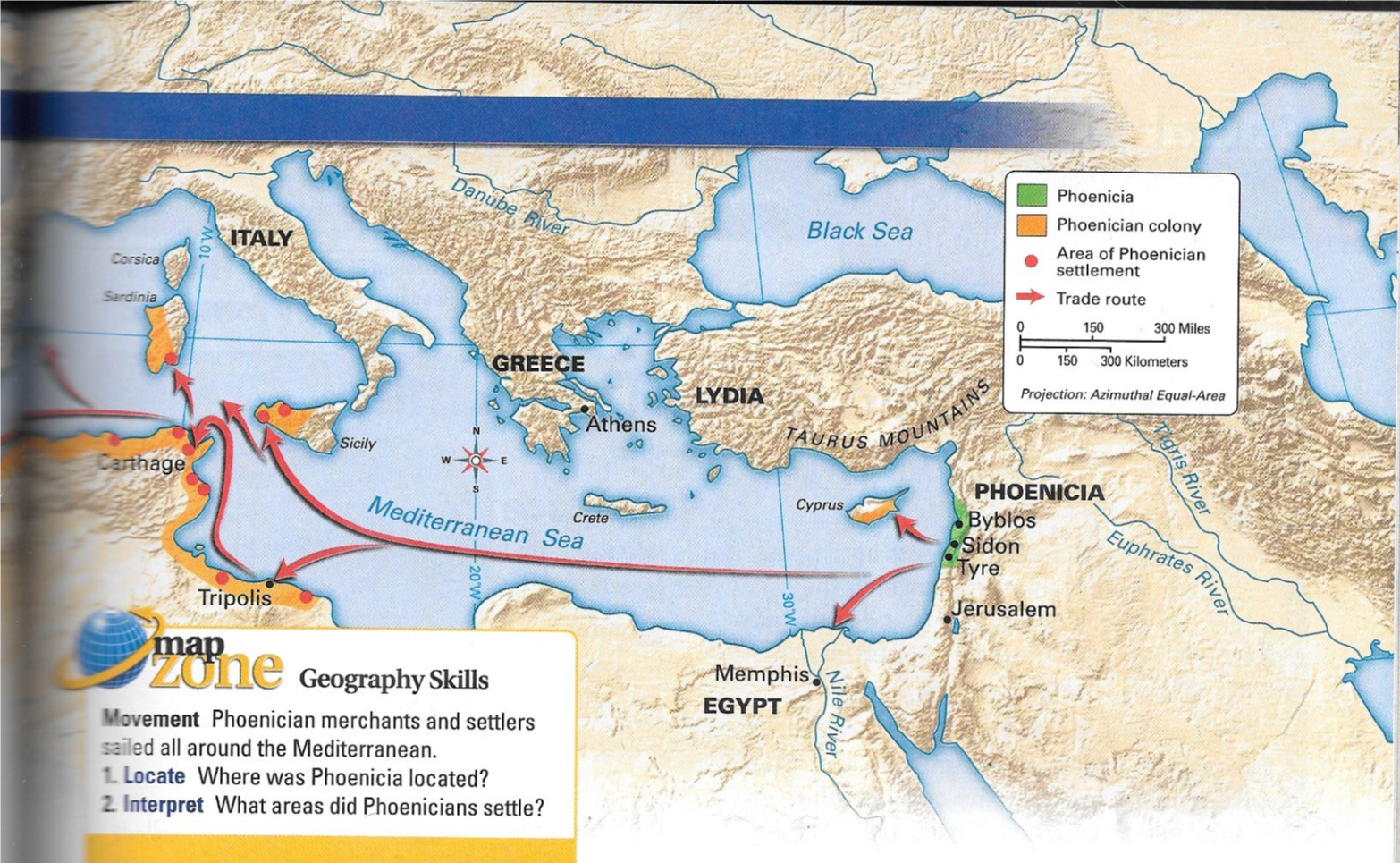
Because so many cedar trees have been cut down in Lebanon's forests over the years, very few trees remain.

Expansion of Trade

Motivated by a desire for trade, the people of Phoenicia became expert sailors. They built one of the world's finest harbors at the city of Tyre. Fleets of fast Phoenician trading ships sailed to ports all around the Mediterranean Sea. Traders traveled to Egypt, Greece, Italy, Sicily, and Spain. They even passed through the Strait of Gibraltar to reach the Atlantic Ocean.

The Phoenicians founded several colonies along their trade routes. Carthage (KAHR-thij), located on the northern coast of Africa, was the most famous of these. It later became one of the most powerful cities on the Mediterranean.

Phoenicia grew wealthy from its trade. Besides lumber, the Phoenicians traded silverwork, ivory carvings, and slaves. They also made and sold beautiful glass items. In addition, the Phoenicians made purple dye from a type of shellfish. They traded cloth that had been dyed with the purple color. Phoenician purple fabric was very popular with rich people all around the Mediterranean.



map zone Geography Skills

Movement Phoenician merchants and settlers sailed all around the Mediterranean.

- 1. Locate** Where was Phoenicia located?
- 2. Interpret** What areas did Phoenicians settle?

The Phoenicians' most important achievement, however, wasn't a trade good. To record their activities, Phoenician traders developed one of the world's first alphabets. An **alphabet** is a set of letters that can be combined to form words. This development made writing much easier. It had a major impact on the ancient world and on our own. In fact, the alphabet we use today is based on the Phoenicians'.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What were the Phoenicians' main achievements?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW Many peoples ruled in the Fertile Crescent after the Sumerians. Some made contributions that are still valued today. Next, you will learn about two religions that developed in the Fertile Crescent and are still alive today—Judaism and Christianity.

Section 4 Assessment go.hrw.com **Online Quiz** KEYWORD: SK7 HP5

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and Places

- a. Identify** Where was **Babylon** located?

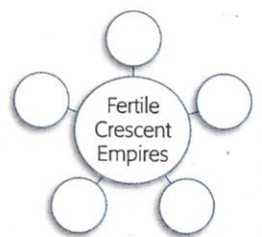
b. Analyze What does **Hammurabi's Code** reveal about Babylonian society?
- a. Describe** What two advantages did Hittite soldiers have over their opponents?

b. Rank Which empire discussed in this section do you feel contributed the most to modern-day society? Why?
- a. Identify** For what trade goods were the Phoenicians known? For what else were they known?

b. Analyze How did Phoenicia grow wealthy?

Critical Thinking

- 4. Categorizing** Use your note-taking diagram with the names of the empires. List at least one advance or achievement made by each empire.



FOCUS ON WRITING

- 5. Gathering Information about Later Peoples** Several different peoples contributed to civilization in the Fertile Crescent after the Sumerians. Which ones, if any, will you include on your poster? What will you show?