



Core Knowledge®

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

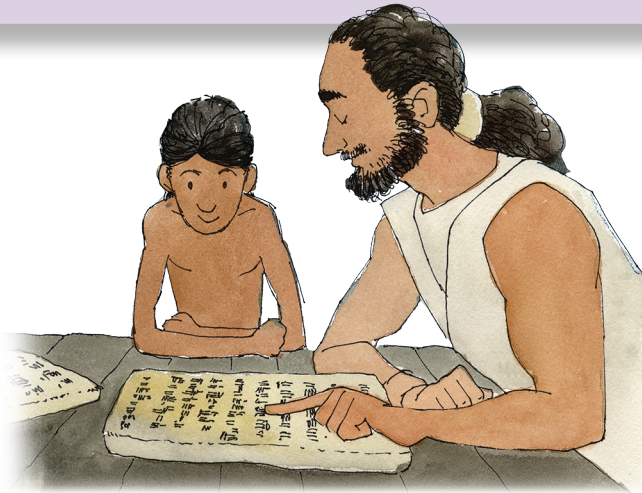
# Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian temple



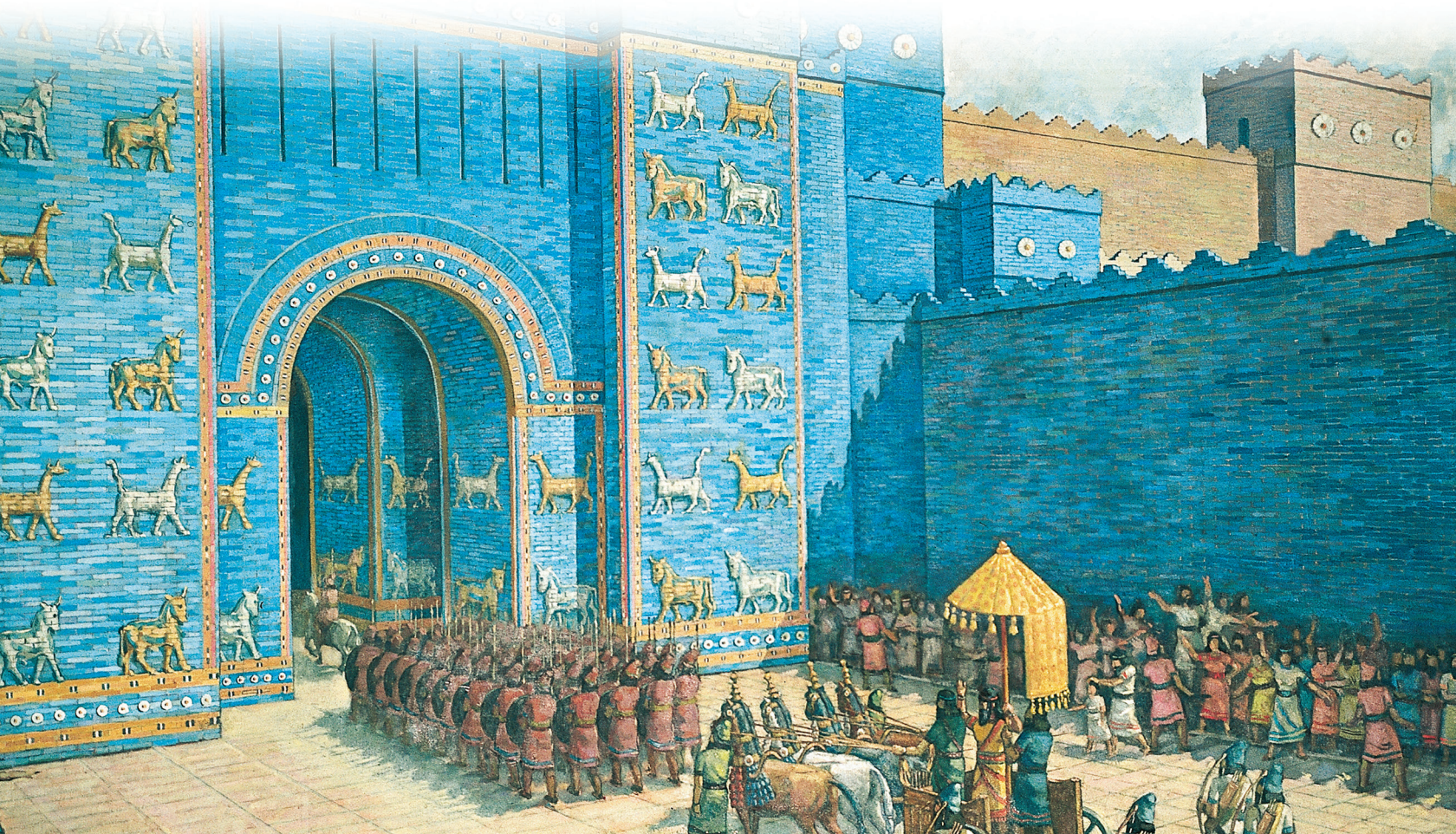
## Teacher Guide

Mesopotamian farmer



Learning cuneiform

Ishtar Gate



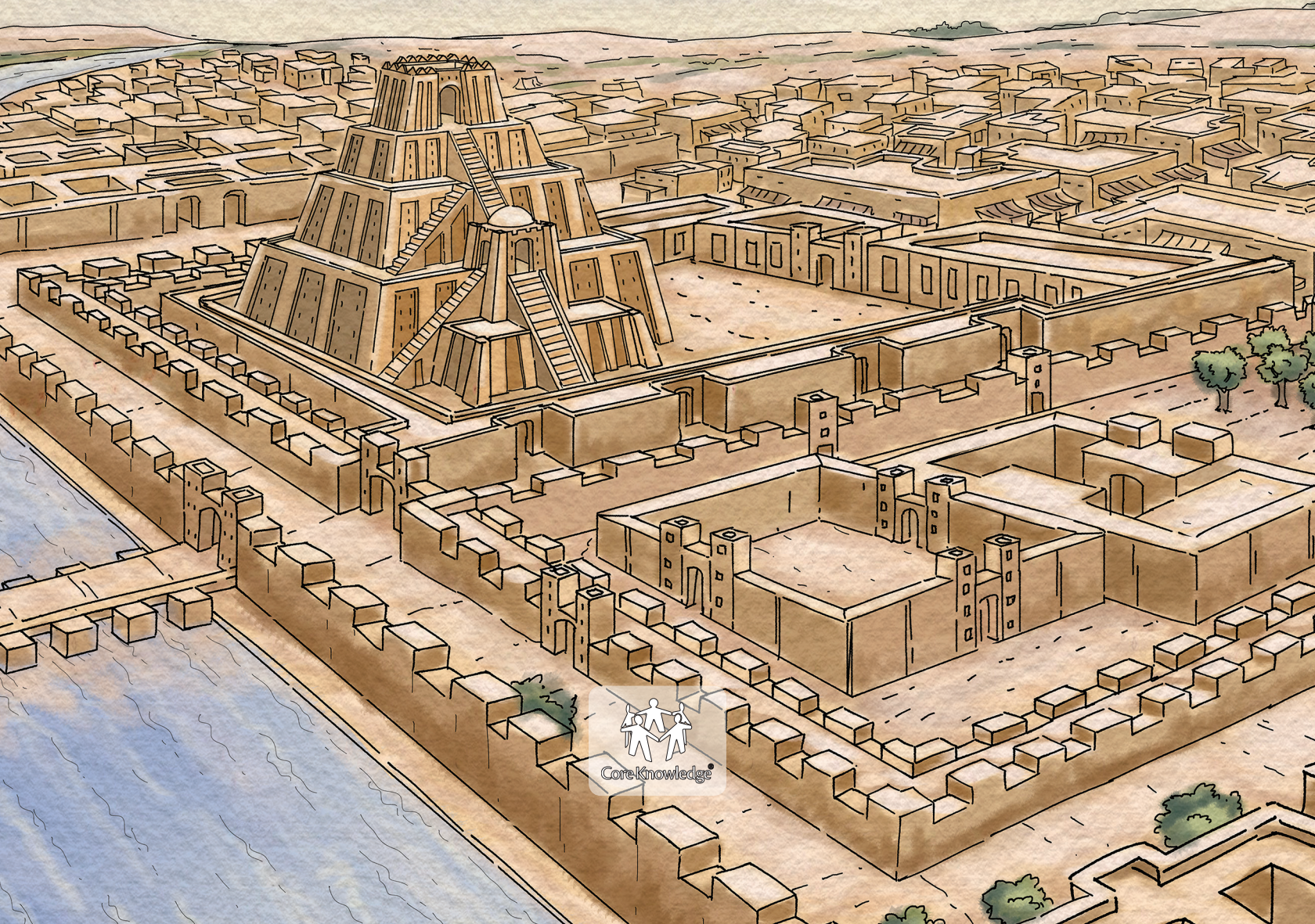






# Mesopotamia

## Teacher Guide





## Creative Commons Licensing

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



### You are free:

- to Share**—to copy, distribute, and transmit the work
- to Remix**—to adapt the work

### Under the following conditions:

**Attribution**—You must attribute the work in the following manner:

*This work is based on an original work of the Core Knowledge® Foundation ([www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)) made available through licensing under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This does not in any way imply that the Core Knowledge Foundation endorses this work.*

**Noncommercial**—You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

**Share Alike**—If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

### With the understanding that:

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do this is with a link to this web page:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Copyright © 2019 Core Knowledge Foundation

[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)

All Rights Reserved.

Core Knowledge®, Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™, Core Knowledge History and Geography™, and CKHG™ are trademarks of the Core Knowledge Foundation.

Trademarks and trade names are shown in this book strictly for illustrative and educational purposes and are the property of their respective owners. References herein should not be regarded as affecting the validity of said trademarks and trade names.

ISBN: 978-1-68380-385-0



# Mesopotamia

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....                                      | 1  |
| Chapter 1 <b>Ancient Times</b> .....                    | 12 |
| Chapter 2 <b>The Land Between Two Rivers</b> .....      | 18 |
| Chapter 3 <b>City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia</b> ..... | 27 |
| Chapter 4 <b>King Hammurabi's Written Laws</b> .....    | 33 |
| Chapter 5 <b>Gods, Goddesses, and Temples</b> .....     | 39 |
| Teacher Resources .....                                 | 45 |





# **Mesopotamia**

## **Teacher Guide**

Core Knowledge History and Geography™ 1



# Introduction

## Why Study Mesopotamia in Grade 1?

---

For most students, even those in Core Knowledge schools, this unit likely represents their first introduction to the study of world history: the study of other civilizations and cultures throughout the world. The Core Knowledge History and Geography™ (CKHG™) series takes a chronological approach to world history, introducing students first to the earliest civilizations known to exist. Students using the Grade 1 CKHG materials will learn about the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

We believe that the chronological study of world history merits inclusion in the early grades' curriculum for multiple reasons. It is consistent with the Core Knowledge approach, as outlined in the Core Knowledge Sequence, which is available on the Core Knowledge website for free download.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Core Knowledge Sequence can be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

By studying world history topics arranged in a coherent and sequenced way at the early grade levels, the groundwork for knowledge is laid. Instruction in subsequent grade levels will build upon this foundation, ensuring both deep knowledge and the ability to think critically about it.

We further believe that the study of world history in these early grades is an opportunity to introduce young students to people, cultures, and practices that may be very different from those that they have encountered thus far. Most young students' "knowledge of the world" is derived from their personal experiences, that is, from interactions with their immediate family members and the people in the town or city in which they live. It is our belief that the study of world history is not only intellectually and academically enriching but is also fundamental to building respect and tolerance for people and cultures that may be different from one's own.

To enable young students to gain this deeper understanding and appreciation of the people, places, and times that they will be studying in CKHG, we have intentionally included developmentally appropriate instruction and activities as part of these lessons, to assist students in connecting what they already know and are familiar with in their own everyday experiences to the unfamiliar—but fascinating—new people and places they will encounter in CKHG.

## ABOUT THIS UNIT

### The Big Idea

Long ago, the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia developed in the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

Over thousands of years, people chose to settle down in certain areas of the fertile crescent, an area in the Middle East shaped like a quarter moon. They came together for religious and social reasons. This led to the need to produce more food to support a growing and more permanent population. In ancient Mesopotamia, people began to rely less on hunting animals and gathering plants. Instead, they developed agricultural methods that enabled them to feed the population. Over time, some people were able to stop working on the land and instead were employed in other ways in the growing towns and cities.

Building, governing, making and selling things, and writing all became alternative occupations, often pursued by people living in towns and cities in ancient Mesopotamia. Such social centers were crucial in building what was one of the world's oldest civilizations. Another crucial part of this early civilization was the development of writing. Writing allowed Mesopotamians to pass on their laws and traditions.

### What Students Should Already Know

Students in Core Knowledge schools should be familiar with the following:

- maps and globes: what they represent and how we use them
- rivers, lakes, and mountains: what they are and how they are represented on maps and globes
- identifying and locating the seven continents on a map and globe:
  - Asia
  - Europe
  - Africa
  - North America
  - South America
  - Antarctica
  - Australia
- naming your continent, country, state, and community
- understanding that maps have keys or legends with symbols and their uses
- finding directions on a map: east, west, north, south
- identifying major oceans: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic
- locating: Canada, United States, Mexico, Central America



## What Students Should Already Know CONTINUED

- locating: the equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, North and South Poles
- explaining and giving examples of the following geographical terms: peninsula, harbor, bay, and island

## What Students Need to Learn

- that Mesopotamia is an early civilization
- importance of Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- importance of farming in the development of towns and cities
- how the development of writing could help to spread ideas
- Code of Hammurabi (early code of laws) and why rules and laws are important in a large community

## AT A GLANCE

The most important ideas in Unit 2 are:

- The settlement of people led to the development of agricultural, or farming, methods, which included using river water to water food crops and understanding the benefits the floodwaters had to the farmland.
- The development of writing enabled societies to communicate and enforce laws, as well as to communicate ideas.
- The importance of the Code of Hammurabi lay in the fact that it was the first written codification of law.

## WHAT TEACHERS NEED TO KNOW

### Background: Setting the Stage

The following is a general description of how civilizations developed. Any specific region may have had variations.

The earliest cultures were based on hunting wild animals and gathering wild plants. At different times, on different continents, humans learned to domesticate edible plants and animals; that is, they learned to plant, cultivate, and harvest wild plants and to breed wild animals for food and as beasts of burden. Some of these societies continued a seminomadic existence, but others settled in one place. People came together in larger numbers for religious and social reasons. This created the need to supplement the traditional food supply. As a result, new agricultural, or farming, methods were developed. With

a predictable food base, populations in these settled communities grew. In time, these permanent communities gave rise to cities and, in turn, to what is known as civilization.

The term *civilization* is not intended to be a value judgment but rather the designation of a culture that displays certain characteristics. There are some typical components of civilizations, but there are variations. For Mesopotamia, the components of this ancient civilization encompassed the rise of settlements, including villages, towns, and cities, often with monumental architecture; division of labor; the establishment of political organization and of social class structure; and a form of writing.

**Note to Teacher:** Not all civilizations had a form of writing. For example, the highly organized Inca of South America did not develop writing but developed the quipu, an ingenious record-keeping system based on knotted strings.

To some scholars, but not all, the presence of cities is a crucial element in the development of a civilization. A city needs a political structure by which it can be governed. The first cities were the seats of power and organization for outlying areas and later for kingdoms and empires.

Many members of the city still engaged in farming, but some residents made their living in other ways. Crafts and commerce developed and, with them, the concept of division of labor. Some people made their living by becoming potters, bricklayers, and weavers, and others became merchants.

At the top of the social pyramid was the ruler, or king, who was occasionally considered divine. The king was the chief priest of the community, serving the deities of the society. The king was also the military leader because these early cities often waged war to gain territory and wealth. Next came the land-owning elites and then the priests, who aided the king with their religious duties. Then came merchants, artisans, and people who could read and write, sometimes called scribes. Farmers and commoners possessing small plots of land formed much of the population, and at the bottom of the social structure were slaves, often captives taken in battle.

The development of writing was an important element of many civilizations, including Mesopotamia's. In Mesopotamia, writing first developed as a means of recording the exchange of goods and the taxes that were paid to the temple or the king. With a large number of people living in close proximity to one another, there could be a rapid dissemination of ideas. This exchange fostered creative and intellectual development, which in turn led to technological innovation. Writing enabled people to document these ideas and create a record of their thoughts and beliefs (or interests). Writing and mathematics enabled governments to organize more efficiently and to spread their authority more effectively over larger areas. Laws could be written down and sent to distant parts of an empire with the expectation that they would be obeyed. Records such as tax payments, treaties, and business contracts could be written down for reference and enforcement. People who could read and write, who were usually male, were specially trained from youth to become good at reading and writing the complex cuneiform scripts used by the Mesopotamians. They were a small group, but they had a great impact on their society.

## Mesopotamia: The Land Between the Rivers

---

"Middle East" is the common term for this area of the world, but geographers call it Southwest Asia. This region includes the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, Iran, and Iraq.

The name *Mesopotamia* means "between the rivers" and refers to the land between the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which essentially corresponds to modern Iraq. This area will be our focus in this unit.

It is worth noting that other ancient civilizations, such as those that developed in China and the Indian subcontinent, also began in river valleys—along the Huang He River in eastern China and along the Indus River in modern-day Pakistan.

### The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin in the mountains of Turkey and flow southeastward across the plains of Iraq. There they join to create the Shatt-al-Arab River. This river empties into the Persian Gulf. Baghdad, the capital of modern Iraq, stands on the banks of the Tigris.

The arc of land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the Middle East is sometimes called “a cradle of civilization.” Civilization arose in the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys because this area provided abundant resources, such as plants that grew well there and game to hunt. In spring, these rivers would flood their banks, and, as the floodwaters receded, the soil that was left behind was rich in many nutrients that plants need in order to grow. As more permanent settlements were established for religious and social reasons, the rich soil and the supply of water encouraged improvements in farming methods and the growth of settlements.

The floodwaters regularly enriched the soil, but they also disrupted farming if they were too high or too low. Over time, the farmers learned to build irrigation ditches to direct the river’s water to the fields, as well as dikes to hold back the floodwaters and channel them into reservoirs for later use. This was very important because the floods differed from year to year, so farmers learned to control the unpredictable flooding and to store food for future use. Building dikes, reservoirs, and irrigation ditches required that people work together, not just within villages, but from village to village. This was the beginning of centralized authority.

### The Development of City-States

Around 3500 BCE, the city-states of Sumer began to emerge in southern Mesopotamia. These were the first cities in the region, and they had certain characteristics in common. Their economies were based on agriculture, and they maintained vast irrigation systems. Because the city-states ruled outlying farmlands, the largest segment of the population in each city-state consisted of peasant farmers. Each city-state had a complex political structure with a leader who ruled as the chief representative of the city’s gods and who oversaw the government. Among the accomplishments of the Sumerians were the invention of wheeled vehicles and the potter’s wheel. Perhaps the greatest innovation was the development of cuneiform writing, possibly the earliest form of written language.

## NOTE TO TEACHERS

### Talking About Beliefs and Religion

In this unit, students will learn that the ancient Mesopotamians worshipped many different gods and goddesses. With limited means to explain naturally occurring phenomena, ancient people often interpreted what was happening in the world around them as the result of actions by various gods and goddesses.



Core Knowledge instructional materials introduce students to various beliefs of world religions in the context of their impact on events throughout history. The purpose is not to explore matters of theology but to provide a basic vocabulary for understanding many events and ideas in history. The goal is to familiarize, not proselytize; to be descriptive, not prescriptive. The tone should be one of respect and balance; no religion should be disparaged by implying that it is a thing of the past.

To avoid any misunderstanding as to what you will introduce to students in this unit and why, we strongly recommend that you communicate the content and goals of the unit with your students' families in advance of starting instruction. You may choose to use Letter to Family (AP 1.1), on page 67, which we have provided for your convenience, or you may prefer to write your own letter.

## UNIT RESOURCES

### Teacher Components

---

*Mesopotamia* Teacher Guide—This Teacher Guide includes a general unit introduction, followed by specific instructional guidance. Primary focus objectives, geographical and/or historical background information for teachers, Core Vocabulary, usually a chapter introduction, and Student Book text to be read aloud—in the form of actual replicated Student Book pages—are included for each chapter. The sections of the Student Book are divided into segments so that the teacher can pause and discuss each section with students. It is important to discuss the images that accompany the text with the students too.

The instructional guidance for each chapter also includes a Check for Understanding and, when appropriate, Additional Activities, such as virtual field trips, short film clips, and art activities, that may be used to reinforce students' understanding of the content. These Additional Activities are intended to provide choices for teachers and should be used selectively.

**A Culminating Activity, Unit Assessment, Performance Task Assessment, Student Activity Pages, and instructions for My Passport for each student are included at the end of this Teacher Guide in Teacher Resources, beginning on page 45.** The Activity Pages are numbered to correspond with the chapter for recommended use and also indicate the recommended order. For example, AP 1.1 is a letter to parents designed to be used with Chapter 1 at the start of the unit.

- » The Culminating Activity is a multistep activity that provides students an opportunity to review unit content knowledge prior to the Unit or Performance Task Assessments. Students will have a chance to play a unit-related game, learn and sing a song about the unit, or create a collaborative classroom mural and/or museum of craft projects they have made to represent artifacts from the time period and culture studied. At the end of the Culminating Activity, they will also assemble and discuss a mini-book version of the Student Book that they can take home to share with family members.
- » The Unit Assessment tests knowledge of the entire unit, using a standard testing format. The teacher reads aloud multiple choice questions or fill-in-the-blank statements, and students are then asked to answer these questions by circling a picture representing the correct response on the Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet.

- » The Performance Task Assessment allows students to apply and demonstrate the knowledge learned during the unit by drawing and talking about images representing key content.
- » My Passport is a tangible reminder and souvenir of the various events and places that students using the CKHG units at their grade level will have visited and learned about over the course of the school year. Note that prior to reading Chapter 1 of each unit aloud, you will be prompted to ask your students to pretend that they are boarding an airplane in real time to travel to a particular place in the world; this approach will be used in units that focus on modern-day cultures, including geography. For units that focus on historical events, you will be prompted to ask students to pretend they are boarding a “time machine” to travel “back in time” with you to visit each historical period and culture studied. Guidance will be provided at the end of every unit, directing teachers how to assist students in creating and updating their passport. The passport template can be downloaded from [www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources). Teachers will need to make sufficient copies for each student before conducting the passport activity.
- » The Activity Pages are designed to reinforce and extend content taught in specific chapters. The Teacher Guide lessons provide clear direction as to when to use specific Activity Pages. Teachers will need to make sufficient copies of the Activity Pages they choose to use for all students in their class.

## Student Component

---

The *Mesopotamia* Student Book includes five chapters, intended to be read aloud by the teacher as the students look at images on each page.

As you will note when you examine the Student Book, minimal text is included on each page, along with colorful photos and engaging illustrations. The design of the Student Book in this way is intentional because students in Kindergarten–Grade 2 are just learning to read. At these grade levels, students are learning how to decode written words, so the complexity and amount of text that these young students can actually read is quite limited.

While some advanced students may be able to read words on a given page of the Student Book, as a general rule, students should not be expected or asked to read aloud the text on the Student Book pages. The text in the Student Book is there so that teachers and parents can read it when sharing the Student Book with students.

The intent of the Grades K–2 CKHG lessons is to build students’ understanding and knowledge of specific historical time periods, people, and events, as well as of associated geographical concepts and skills. It is for this very reason that in Grades K–2 CKHG, the historical and geographical knowledge of each lesson is delivered to students using Student Book text (read aloud by the teacher) and accompanied by detailed images. Cognitive science research has clearly documented the fact that students’ listening comprehension far surpasses their reading comprehension well into the late elementary and early middle school grades. Said another way, students are able to understand and grasp far more complex ideas and text that they hear read aloud than they would ever be able to read or comprehend when they read to themselves. For a more thorough discussion of listening and reading comprehension and the underlying cognitive science research, teachers may want to refer to Appendix A of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, noting in particular the Speaking and Listening section of the appendix.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to this appendix can be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)



### Pacing

---

The *Mesopotamia* unit is one of nine world and American history and geography units in the Grade 1 CKHG series that we encourage teachers to use over the course of the school year. We have intentionally left the pacing and timing needed to teach the content presented in the Teacher Guide and Student Book very flexible. Teachers can choose how much they read aloud and discuss in a single instructional period, as well as how often each week they use the CKHG materials.

In many instances, it is likely that the teacher will be able to read aloud and discuss a complete chapter from the Student Book in a single instructional period. At other times, teachers may choose to spread the Read Aloud and discussion of a longer chapter over two instructional periods.

At the end of this unit introduction, you will find a blank Pacing Guide on page 11 that you may use to plan how to pace reading aloud and discussing each chapter, as well as when to use the various other resources in this unit. We strongly recommend that you preview this entire unit and create your pacing guide before teaching the first lesson. As a general rule of thumb, we recommend that you spend no more than ten to fifteen days teaching the *Mesopotamia* unit, so that you have sufficient time to teach the other units in the Grade 1 CKHG series.

### Reading Aloud

---

Within each Read Aloud, the text to be read aloud to students is in roman text in the Teacher Guide (like this); instructions intended only for the teacher are in boldface (**like this**). Core Vocabulary words appear in boldface color (**like this**). You may sometimes wish to preview one or two of these vocabulary words before reading a segment of the text. In most instances, however, it may be more effective to pause and explain the meaning of the words as they are encountered when you read aloud.

It is important to note that students at this grade level are not expected to give definitions of the Core Vocabulary words. Rather, the intent is for the teacher to model the use of Core Vocabulary in the Read Aloud and in discussions about the text to expose students to challenging, domain-specific vocabulary. If students hear these words used in context by the teacher over the entire unit, they will gain an increasingly nuanced understanding of these words. With support and encouragement by the teacher, students may even begin to use these same words in their own oral discussions of the unit.

Interspersed throughout the lessons, you will note instances in which instructional guidance is included. This guidance may call the teacher's attention to Core Vocabulary and idiomatic or figurative language that may be confusing and therefore require explanation. In other instances, Supports may direct the teacher to call attention to specific aspects of an image—as shown on a page in the Student Book. And, in some instances, a Challenge, usually a more demanding task or question, may be included for teachers' optional use.

You will also notice within the Read Aloud segments that the Teacher Guide directs you to pause occasionally to ask questions about what students have just heard. By using this carefully scaffolded approach to reading aloud and discussing a portion of the content a bit at a time, you will be able to observe and ensure that all students understand what they have heard before you proceed to the next section of the Read Aloud.

## Turn and Talk

You will also notice specific instances in the Read Aloud portion of the lesson designated as Turn and Talk opportunities. During these times, teachers should direct students to turn and talk to a partner to discuss specific things. These types of discussion opportunities will allow students to more fully engage with the content and will bring to life the topics and events being discussed.

## Big Questions and Core Vocabulary

At the beginning of each Read Aloud segment in the Teacher Guide, you will find a Big Question. The answer to each Big Question is included as part of the text read aloud in each chapter of the Student Book. At the end of each Read Aloud segment, you will be prompted to formally re-ask the Big Question for students to discuss during the Check for Understanding. Key vocabulary, phrases, and idioms are also identified in each lesson of the Teacher Guide.

| Read Aloud Chapters                         | Big Questions   | Core Vocabulary  |
|---|---|--|
| Chapter 1: Ancient Times                    | What did people long, long ago learn how to do that changed how they lived?                 | ancient, gathering, farm (farming), cities, civilization |
| Chapter 2: The Land Between Two Rivers      | Why were the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers important to the Mesopotamians?                    | protect (protection), enemies, flooded, rich soil        |
| Chapter 3: City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia | In ancient Mesopotamia, what was the system of writing called, and why was it important?    | reeds, cuneiform, archaeologists                         |
| Chapter 4: King Hammurabi's Written Laws    | How might writing down King Hammurabi's laws have helped the people of ancient Mesopotamia? | laws   |
| Chapter 5: Gods, Goddesses, and Temples     | What did the people of Mesopotamia believe their gods and goddesses could do?               | temples, gods, goddesses, ruins, half-god                |

## Activity Pages

### Activity Pages



AP 1.1

AP 1.2

AP 2.1

AP 3.1

The following activity pages can be found in Teacher Resources, pages 67–70. They are to be used with the lesson specified for additional class work or in some instances may be sent home to make parents aware of what children are studying. Be sure to make sufficient copies for your students before conducting the activities.

- Chapter 1—Letter to Family (AP 1.1)
- Chapter 1—World Map (AP 1.2)
- Chapter 2—Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1)
- Chapter 3—Early Writing (AP 3.1)



## Additional Activities and Website Links

---

An Additional Activities section, related to material the students are studying, may be found at the end of most chapters in this Teacher Guide. Even though there are multiple suggested activities, it is advised that you choose activities based on your students' interests and needs, as well as on the instructional time available. Many of the activities include website links, and you should check the links before using them in class.

### Books

Baby Professor. *The 7 Great Cities of Ancient Mesopotamia*. Ancient History Books for Kids, Children's Ancient History. Newark, DE: Speedy Publishing, 2017.

Mehta-Jones, Shilpa. *Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Peoples of the Ancient World. New York: Crabtree Publishing Company, 2004.

Steele, Philip, and John Farndon. *DK Eyewitness Books: Mesopotamia*. New York: DK Publishing, 2007.

Zeman, Ludmila. *Gilgamesh the King*. The Gilgamesh Trilogy. Toronto: Tundra Books, 1998.

MESOPOTAMIA PACING GUIDE

\_\_\_\_\_’s Class

**Note to Teacher:** *Mesopotamia* is intended to be taught as the second unit of Grade 1 CKHG.

Week 1

Day 1                      Day 2                      Day 3                      Day 4                      Day 5

*Mesopotamia*

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Week 2

Day 6                      Day 7                      Day 8                      Day 9                      Day 10

*Mesopotamia*

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Week 3

Day 11                      Day 12                      Day 13                      Day 14                      Day 15

*Mesopotamia*

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|



## CHAPTER 1

# Ancient Times

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Understand the relationship between the development of farming and the growth of cities. (SL.1.2, 1.3)
- ✓ Understand that one of the first civilizations started in an area known as Mesopotamia. (SL.1.2, 1.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *ancient*, *gathering*, *farm (farming)*, *cities*, and *civilization*. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

### Materials Needed

#### Activity Pages



AP 1.1  
AP 1.2

- globe
- individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book
- teacher and individual student copies of World Map (AP 1.2)
- individual student copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1)

### What Teachers Need to Know

#### Mesopotamia

*Middle East* is the common term for this area of the world, but geographers call it Southwest Asia. It includes the modern-day countries of the Arabian Peninsula, the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, Iran, and Iraq.

The name *Mesopotamia* means “between the rivers” and refers to the land between the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which corresponds to modern-day Iraq.

## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce *Mesopotamia* and Chapter 1: “Ancient Times”

Introduce students to the phrase “long, long ago,” noting that people, events, or things from “long, long ago” are people, events, or things that are very, very old. Explain that another way to describe people, events, or things from long, long ago is to use the word **ancient**. Someone or something that is *ancient* is very, very old.

To quickly check understanding of the word *ancient*, tell students that you are going to name different events or things. If you name something that could be described as ancient, as in something from a time long, long ago, the whole class should respond, “ancient.” If you name something that is not from long, long ago, the class should respond, “not ancient.”

- the breakfast you ate this morning (*not ancient*)
- dinosaurs (*ancient*)
- the clothes that you are wearing to school (*not ancient*)
- a drawing you made today (*not ancient*)

**CHALLENGE**—Let students know that another way to say “not ancient” with just one word is “recent.” Repeat the examples a second time, this time asking students to respond with either “ancient” or “recent.”

Tell students that in this unit, they will learn about ancient people who lived long, long ago in an ancient place called Mesopotamia (/meh\*so\*po\*tay\*mee\*uh/).

**SUPPORT**—Have students repeat the word *Mesopotamia* with you while clapping out the six syllables.

Activity Page



Use the globe and World Map (AP 1.2) to show students where ancient Mesopotamia existed long, long ago (point to modern-day Iraq). Explain that ancient Mesopotamia was located on the continent of Asia.

AP 1.2

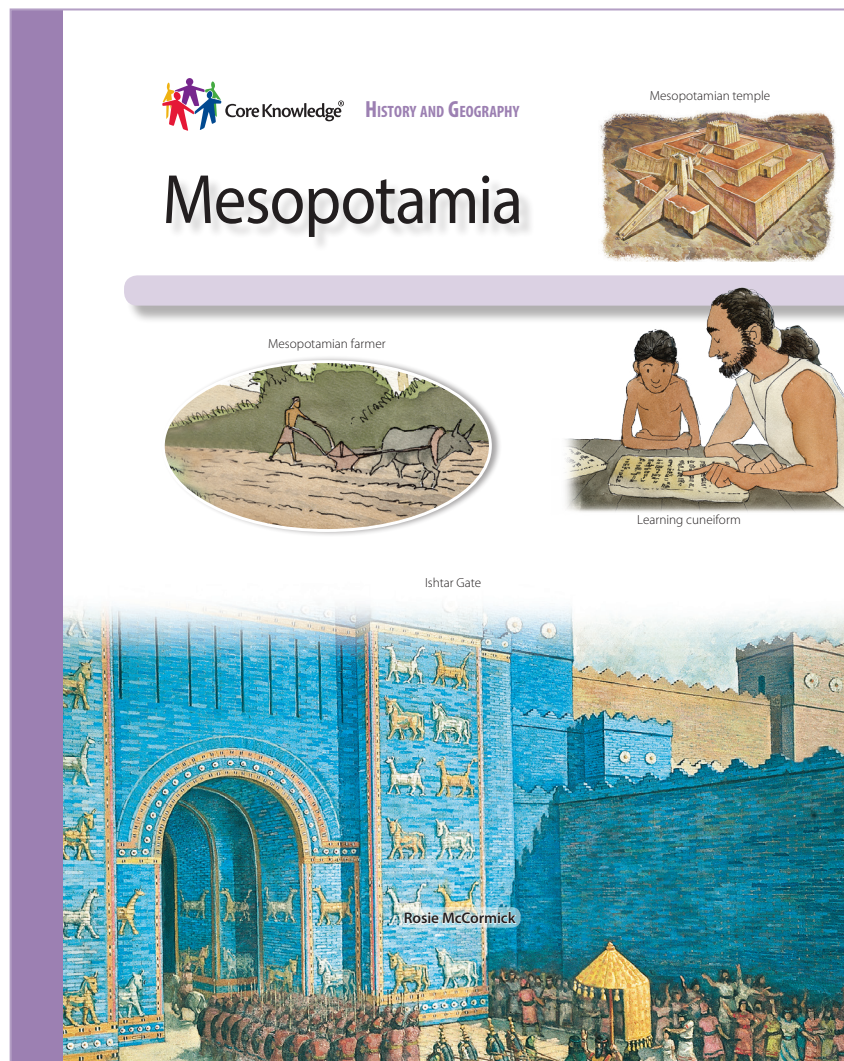
To provide context, locate the United States and the approximate location of your state on both the globe and World Map so that students get a sense of how far away Asia—and the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia—are from where they presently live.

**SUPPORT**—To help students better understand how far away this area of the world is from where they live, tell them that the fastest way to get there from the United States would be to travel by plane. The entire trip from the United States to Asia would take many, many hours.

**Distribute copies of the Student Book to the class. Ask students to look at the cover and describe what they see. Discuss whether the images appear to be from ancient or recent times.**



Remind students that in this unit they will be learning about people, events, and things from ancient times, that is, from long, long ago, in a place called Mesopotamia.



Tell students that you are going to pretend that you have a special machine so that you can all travel back in time to visit ancient Mesopotamia.

Ask students to close their eyes and make sure that they are “buckled in,” so that they can travel back in time. Count backward, saying, “3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Back to Mesopotamia!” and then ask students to open their eyes.

## Big Question

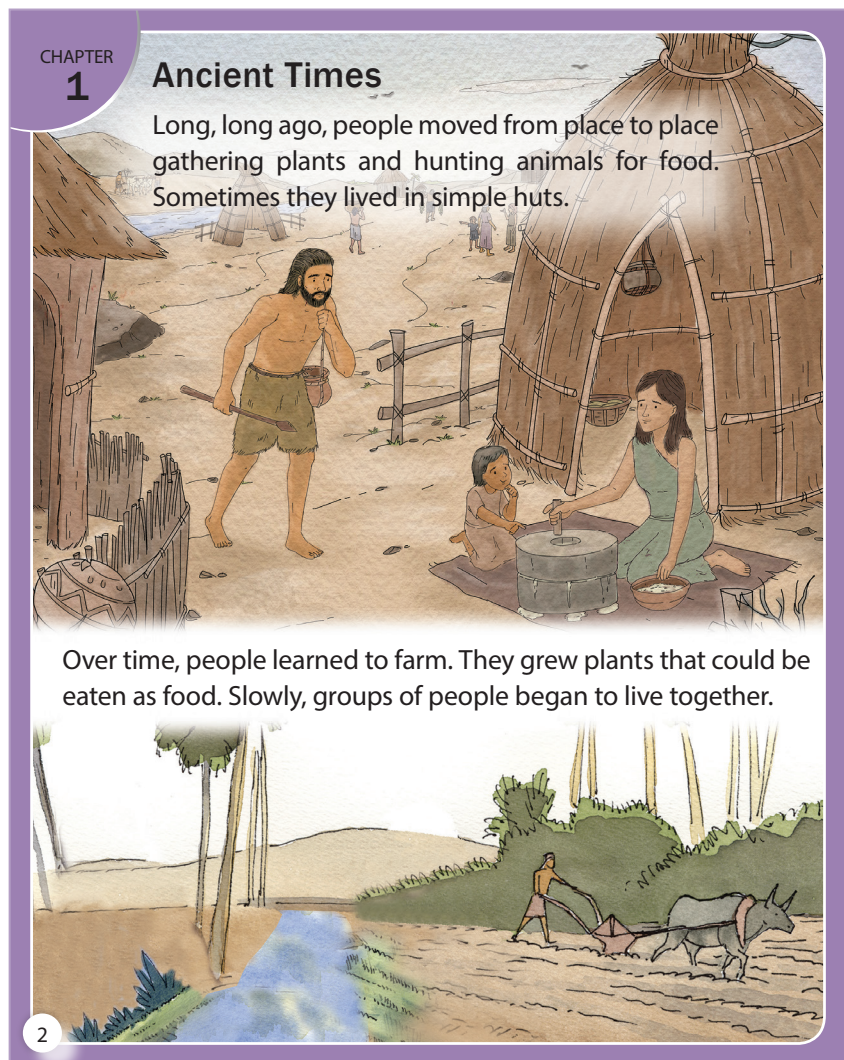
What did people long, long ago learn how to do that changed how they lived?

## Core Vocabulary

ancient   gathering   farm (farming)   cities   civilization

## Chapter 1: “Ancient Times”

Ask students to turn to page 2 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Begin by reading the chapter title, “Ancient Times.”



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **gathering** plants means looking for, picking, and collecting plants to eat.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that when people learned to **farm**, they learned to plant seeds so that they could grow the plants they needed for food.

**Call students’ attention to the top image, and ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What do you see in the top image on page 2?

- » Possible responses: I see people; the man, woman, and child might be a family. The man has a sharp tool, maybe a spear; maybe he is coming back from hunting. I see a hut where they probably live and sleep. There is no furniture; it looks as if they probably sleep on the ground inside the hut.

**Note to Teacher:** You may want to explain to students that the mother is using a type of tool called a mortar and pestle made of stone or hard wood. She is probably grinding up plants that have been gathered to make food to eat.



**LITERAL**—Long, long ago, how did people first get food to eat?

- » People had to look for and find plants that they could eat. They also hunted animals to eat for food.

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think people had to move from place to place to find food?

- » If people couldn't find enough plants and animals to eat in one place, they would have to move to another place to try to find food. People probably had to move around a lot.

**Call students' attention to the bottom image, and ask the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What did people learn as a new way to get food?

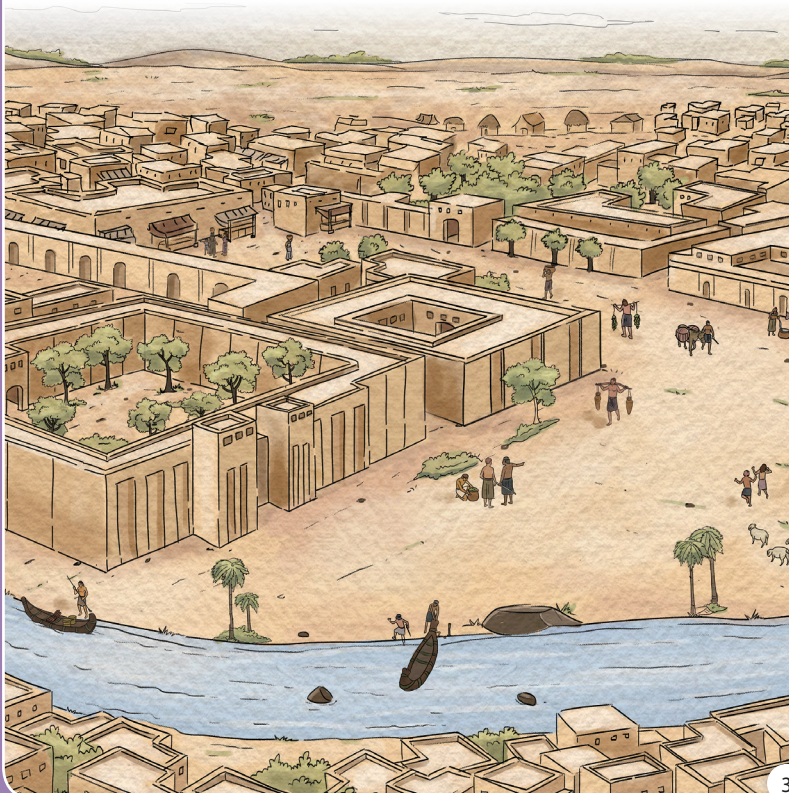
- » People learned how to farm and grow their own food.

**INFERENTIAL**—Once people started farming and growing their own food, do you think it was still necessary for people to continue to move from place to place?

- » Once they were able to farm and grow their own food close to where they lived, they did not need to keep moving to other places to find food.

**Ask students to look at the image on page 3 as you read aloud.**

The ancient Mesopotamians became so good at farming that some people had time to do other things. They built cities that had buildings, streets, and gardens. Mesopotamian kings and queens lived in these beautiful cities, along with other people. The Mesopotamians created a great civilization.



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **cities** are places where many people live and work.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain to students that they will learn more about what a **civilization** is as they listen to other chapters of this unit. For now, explain that a civilization is what we call a group of people who speak the same language, have the same laws, and believe the same things. People in a civilization have the same way of living and often live together in cities.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What do you see in the image on page 3?

- » Answers may vary, but students should mention that there are many different buildings and walls; in some places there are trees or gardens; there are streets or places for people to walk; some people are carrying things; and there is a river where some people are using boats for travel and carrying things.

**INFERENTIAL**—How do buildings in this image compare to the places where people lived before they started farming and creating cities? Look back at the picture on the top of page 2.

- » Answers may vary, but students may note that, on page 3, there appear to be many, many buildings, with the buildings very close together; the buildings also look as if they were made of stone, which probably took many people a long time to build; the buildings look as if they would last over time. Before people started farming, when they moved around a lot, they lived in huts that appear to be made from sticks. These huts were probably not very strong; they were probably quick and easy for one person to build.

**LITERAL**—Where is this ancient city located?

- » This city is located in ancient Mesopotamia.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—What did people long, long ago learn how to do that changed how they lived?

- » Answers may vary, but students should note that long, long ago, when people learned to farm and to grow plants that they could eat as food, they did not need to keep moving to different places. More people were able to live closer together, in the same place. They built strong buildings that would last and cities.

Activity Page



AP 1.1

**Note to Teacher:** Distribute copies of Letter to Family (AP 1.1) for students to take home.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Land Between Two Rivers

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Understand that ancient Mesopotamia was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3, RI.1.6)
- ✓ Identify the development of cities as one characteristic or feature of a civilization. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that the Mesopotamian kings were in charge of protecting the Mesopotamian people, cities, and farmland. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers sometimes flooded, leaving behind rich soil that was good for farming. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that while some people continued to be farmers, other people lived in the cities and had different jobs. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that farmers grew food to feed the people who lived in the cities. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *protect (protection), enemies, flooded, and rich soil.* (L.1.4, L.1.5)

### Materials Needed

Activity Page



AP 1.2

- globe
- teacher display copy of World Map (AP 1.2)
- individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book.



## What Teachers Need to Know

---

### The Tigris and Euphrates

The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin in the mountains of Turkey and flow southeastward across the plains of Iraq. There they join to create the Shatt-al-Arab River. This river empties into the Persian Gulf. Baghdad, the capital of modern Iraq, stands on the banks of the Tigris. The arc of land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers was the site of ancient Mesopotamia, a great civilization in the Middle East, often called the “fertile crescent” and “a cradle of civilization.” Many early civilizations arose in river valleys because these areas had fertile soil and ample water resources. At times, the rivers would flood and the water would flow over either side of the riverbanks. As the water receded, the soil that was left behind was rich in many nutrients that plants need in order to grow. As more and more people were drawn to the abundant resources of this large river basin, they learned to domesticate plants. They saw that large, healthy plants grew in the dark, rich soil. And so people settled in one place and developed new farming methods. Early settlements led to the development of villages and towns—and eventually to cities as well.

The floodwaters regularly enriched the soil, but they also disrupted farming if they were too high or too low. Over time, the farmers learned to build irrigation ditches to direct the river’s water to the fields, as well as dikes to hold back the floodwaters and channel them into reservoirs for later use. Building dikes, reservoirs, and irrigation ditches required that people work together, not just within villages, but from village to village. This was the beginning of centralized authority.

## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce Chapter 2: “The Land Between Two Rivers”

---

Activity Page



AP 1.2



Remind students that in Chapter 1, they learned about an ancient place called Mesopotamia that existed long, long ago. Display the World Map (AP 1.2), and point out the area where ancient Mesopotamia was located.

Tell students that in this chapter, they will learn why two rivers were so important to the ancient Mesopotamians.

### Big Question

---

Why were the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers important to the Mesopotamians?

### Core Vocabulary

---

protect (protection)

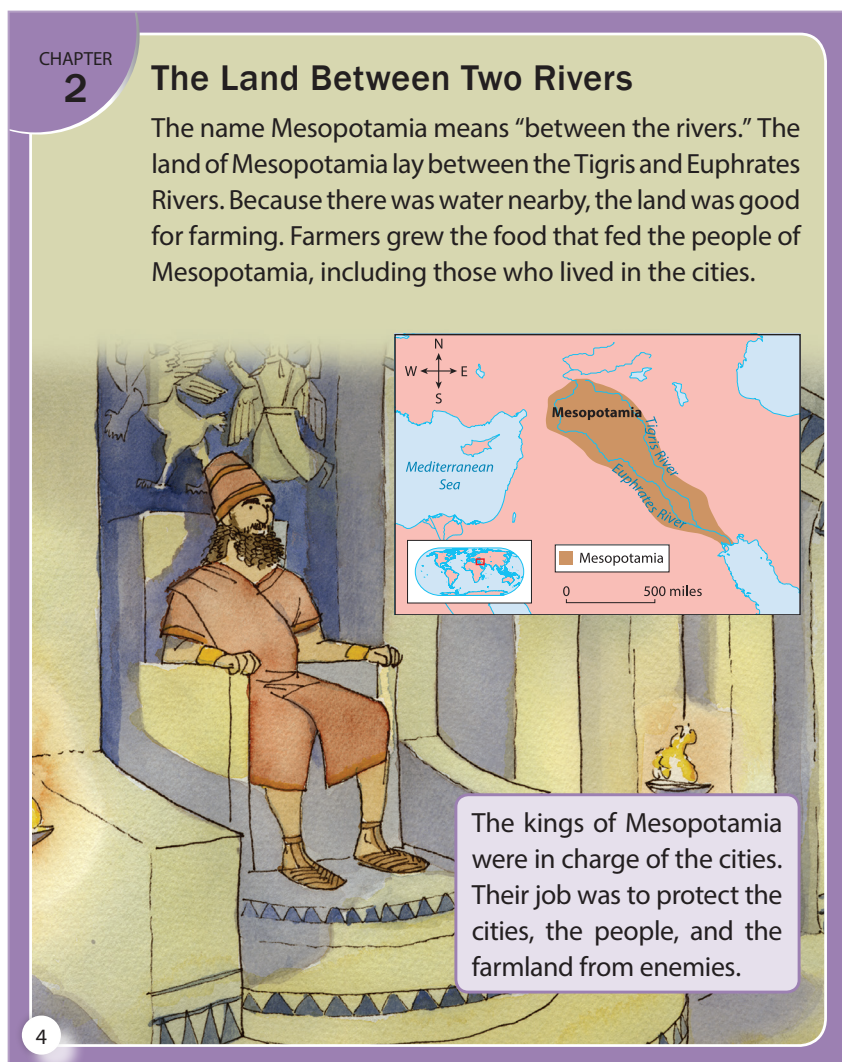
enemies

flooded

rich soil

## Chapter 2: “The Land Between Two Rivers”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 4 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Begin by reading the title of the chapter, “The Land Between Two Rivers.”



**SUPPORT**—Model and ask students to copy you, holding up the pointer and middle fingers of one hand in a “V” and explaining that your fingers are the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. With your other hand, point to the area between your fingers, and explain that this area of land is where the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia started.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that the sentence, “Their job was to protect the cities, the people, and farmland from **enemies**,” means that the kings had to keep the Mesopotamian people, cities, and the farmland safe from other people who were not Mesopotamians and who may have wanted to hurt the Mesopotamians and take the farmland or cities for themselves.

**Ask students the following questions:**

 **LITERAL**—Why is the name *Mesopotamia* a good name for this ancient civilization?

- » *Mesopotamia* means “between the rivers”; it is a good name for this ancient civilization because the land lay between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

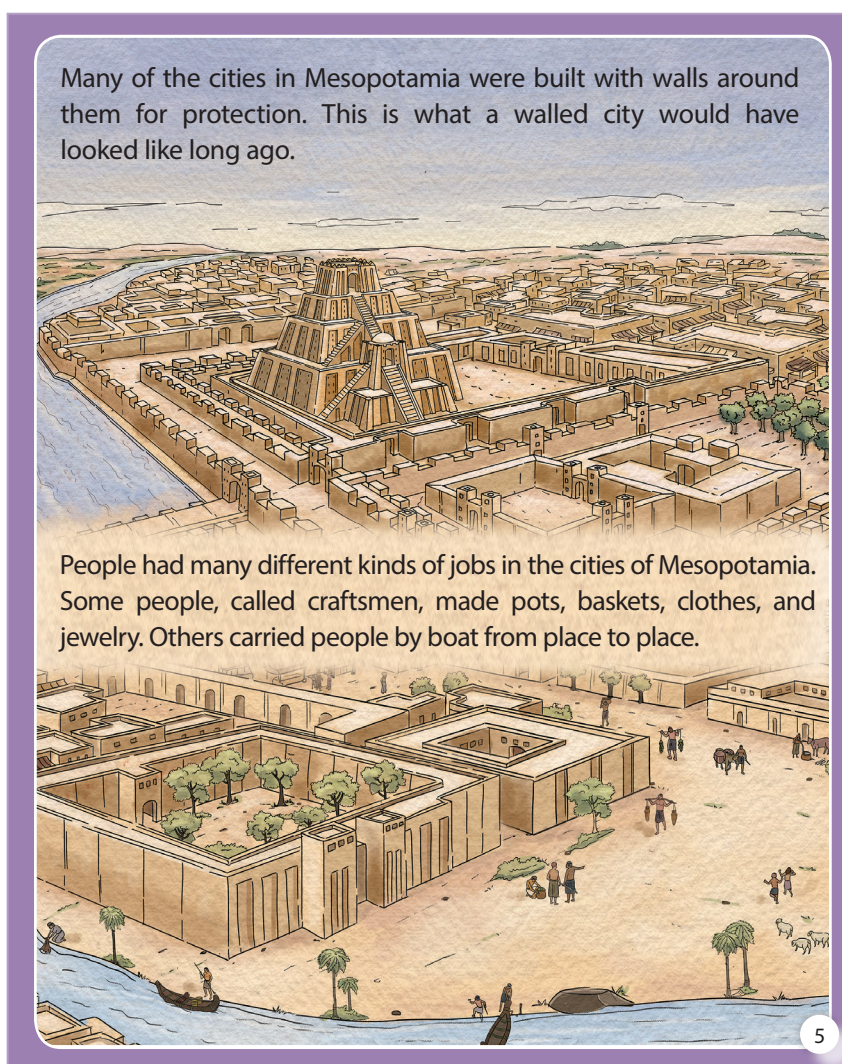
**INFERENTIAL**—Why were Mesopotamian farmers important?

- » Farmers were important because they grew food to feed everyone, including the people who lived in the cities.

**LITERAL**—What did the kings of Mesopotamia do?

- » The kings had to protect the cities, people, and farmland from their enemies.

**Ask students to turn to page 5 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud.**



**SUPPORT**—Call attention to the top image, and ask students to describe what they see. Students should note that there is a river next to walls that seem to surround many, many buildings, including a very tall building in the center of the city.

**CHALLENGE**—Based on the size of the building in the center and what they have learned so far about ancient Mesopotamia, ask students to speculate about the importance of this building and what it might be. Acceptable answers at this time are that the building was probably very important and that something important probably happened there; students may speculate that this is where the Mesopotamian kings lived.



Tell students that they will learn in a later chapter exactly what this important building is.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Why were there walls around the cities in Mesopotamia?

» The walls protected the Mesopotamian cities from their enemies.

**INFERENTIAL**—Do you think just a few or many people lived in a Mesopotamian city? Why?

» There are many, many buildings in the image, so many people probably lived in a Mesopotamian city.

**LITERAL**—What kinds of jobs did people in the city have?

» They had all kinds of jobs. Craftsmen made things such as pots, baskets, clothes, and jewelry. Other Mesopotamians carried people by boat from place to place.

**Ask students to turn to page 6 of the Student Book and describe what they see in the image. Students may note that they see fields where plants are growing, next to a river. There appears to be a walled city with buildings nearby.**

**Ask students to listen carefully and look at the image as you read aloud.**

The farmers grew food in the fields outside the city walls. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were important. Sometimes the rivers flooded. The floodwater carried rich soil into the fields that was good for growing plants. At other times, when there wasn't enough rain for the plants, river water was brought to the fields.



6

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that when the rivers **flooded**, water flowed outside the banks of the rivers onto the land nearby that was usually dry.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **rich soil** is dirt that has the things that plants need in order to grow.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Where did the people in the cities get their food from?

- » The farmers grew enough food to feed the people in the cities.

**LITERAL**—What happened when the rivers flooded?

- » Water flowed outside the rivers onto the land nearby that was usually dry.

**LITERAL**—What did the floodwaters leave behind?

- » The floodwaters left behind rich soil that was good for growing plants.

**LITERAL**—How else did the Mesopotamian farmers use the river water?

- » The farmers brought water from the rivers to water the plants in the fields.

**TURN AND TALK:**

**EVALUATIVE**—How did the Mesopotamian king, the people who lived in the cities, and the farmers depend on one another?

- » Answers may vary but may include the following: the king was in charge and provided protection for everyone; in return, he got food to eat; different people in the cities made many different things, such as pots, baskets, and clothes, that other people in the cities and the farmers could use; in return they got food from the farmers and protection from the king; the farmers provided food for everyone; in return, they got protection from the king and different things that the city people made.



**CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION**

**TURN AND TALK**—Why were the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers important to the Mesopotamians?

- » The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were important to the Mesopotamians for many reasons. When the rivers flooded, they left behind rich soil in the fields, which was good for growing plants. The farmers also used water from the rivers to water the plants in the fields.

## Additional Activities



### Map of Mesopotamia (RI.1.7)

Activity Page



AP 2.1

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1), one blue and one brown crayon, pencil, or marker per student

Distribute Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1) and the crayons, pencils, or markers to students.

Show students where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers are on the map. Have them trace the rivers in blue.

Show students where the land is between the rivers, and have them color it brown. Explain that this land is Mesopotamia.

Show students where the three cities (Ur, Uruk, and Babylon) are on the map, and have students circle them.

**Note to Teacher:** Students are not expected to know the names of all these cities.

Point out the compass rose on the map. Remind students what the letters on the compass rose stand for. Ask students:

- Are the cities on the map in the north or south of Mesopotamia?
  - » The cities are in the south.

### Now and Then: We Depend on One Another (SL.1.1, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, SL.1.5, SL.1.6)

**Materials Needed:** internet access to review and determine whether to incorporate the teacher and/or student resources in the activities described below



**Background for Teachers:** Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the following teacher and student resources can be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

#### Teacher Resources:

- Neighborhoods and Communities Around the World
- A Community Is a Place Where People Live and Work
- Lesson Ideas: Community Helpers
- Community Helpers Craft Idea

#### Student Resources:

- (Video) *My Community* (video discussion by kids)
- (Video) *What Makes a Good Community*

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the people who lived in ancient Mesopotamia, their different roles, and their interconnectedness. There were kings, farmers, and people who made different things, such as pots, baskets, clothes, and jewelry.



Students may gain a deeper understanding of the interdependence within the Mesopotamian civilization by talking about the people in their own lives, the roles they play, how people in the students' own community are interconnected, and how their daily routine is dependent on the people in their community.

### Sharing Daily Routines

If possible, you and your students should sit in a discussion circle. Begin by asking students: "What are the things that you do every day?"

- » Possible responses may include: "I eat breakfast, I ride the bus, I put on my clothes, I go to school," etc.

Prompt students to expand on their answers by asking such additional questions as: "Who helps you with these things?" "Where do the items you use for your daily routines come from?" "Who does things with you each day?"

- » Possible responses may include: "My mom makes breakfast in the morning." "My teacher teaches me." "My clothes are made by my grandmother/I buy my clothes from someone at the store." "My bus driver takes me to school."

### Role Playing Daily Routines Without Key People in Small Groups

Group students into small teams of two to three students. Direct each member of the team to talk about part of his or her daily routine and what it would look like without the key community members who are involved in this routine and/or the key items or tasks that are done by different people in the community.

Once a team member has described his or her scenario, direct the group to pick just one scenario to act out together. Allow students to practice acting out the routine together for several minutes.

An example of role play with student dialogue might be acted out as follows:

Student 1 (Role: Student): I am ready to go to school; I am heading to the bus stop and it's a beautiful day. I take the bus to school every morning, and it's great!

Student 2 (Role: Bus driver): I drive the bus every morning, but today I am sick. I will not be able to drive all the kids to school.

Student 1 (Role: Student): I am waiting for the bus, but it is not here. I don't think I will be able to go to school today.

Student 3: (Role: Teacher): I am so worried about my students; I hope they are okay. Nobody came to class today.

Student 1 (Role: Student): Today at school we are supposed to learn about turtles, so I am really excited. But now I might not be able to do that because the bus is late/didn't come. I hope the bus driver is okay!

Student 2: (Role: Bus driver): I love driving the neighborhood kids to school; I can't wait to go back to work tomorrow so that they can go to their lessons and learn many great things.

### **Class Presentations of Daily Routines Without Key People**

Provide an opportunity for each group to act out an example of what might happen to students' daily routines if key community members are not able to carry out their usual roles, and/or if the key tasks have to be completed by different people in the community.

Provide an opportunity after each presentation to discuss what happened when key community helpers were not able to help as usual.

Whenever possible, point out how important other people in the community are in students' lives.

## CHAPTER 3

# City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia

### Primary Focus Objectives

- ✓ Discuss aspects of daily life in a city in Mesopotamia. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4)
- ✓ Identify the development of writing as one characteristic or feature of a civilization. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *reeds*, *cuneiform*, and *archaeologists*. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

### Materials Needed

Activity Pages



AP 1.2

AP 2.1

- globe
- teacher display copies of World Map (AP 1.2) and Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1)
- individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book

### What Teachers Need to Know

Around 3500 BCE, the city-states of Sumer began to emerge in southern Mesopotamia. These were the first cities in the region, and they had certain characteristics in common. Their economies were based on agriculture, and they maintained vast irrigation systems. Because the city-states controlled outlying farmland, the largest segment of the population in each city-state consisted of peasant farmers. Each city-state had a complex political structure with a ruler who ruled as the chief representative of the city's gods and oversaw the government. Among the accomplishments of the Sumerians were the invention of wheeled vehicles and the potter's wheel. Perhaps the greatest innovation was the development of cuneiform writing, one of the earliest forms of written language. The earliest evidence of cuneiform being used was found in Uruk, an important city in ancient Mesopotamia.

*Cuneiform* comes from the Latin word *cuneus*, meaning “wedge-shaped”; Mesopotamians who could write used styluses cut from reeds to make wedge-shaped forms on clay tablets. These forms were pictographs, pictures of objects. Initially, cuneiform was used to record offerings to the gods, such as bags of grain. Over time, Mesopotamians developed ways to record ideas as well as objects, and they began to set down treaties, contracts, prayers, and stories. Only certain people were trained to read and write, typically men, but some women also held these positions. It is important to note that women had several rights and freedoms in Mesopotamian civilization. Women could be priestesses, they could own land and businesses, and all women, regardless of social rank, learned to make cloth by spinning and weaving.



## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce Chapter 3: “City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia”

---

Activity Pages



AP 1.2

AP 2.1



Display the World Map (AP 1.2) and Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1), and review the key points of the previous chapter, including the location of the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the importance of these rivers to the Mesopotamians, the development of cities, and the ways that the Mesopotamians depended on one another.

Tell students that in this chapter, they will learn about what city life was like in ancient Mesopotamia.

### Big Question

---

In ancient Mesopotamia, what was the system of writing called, and why was it important?

### Core Vocabulary

---

reeds      cuneiform

### Chapter 3: “City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia”

---

**Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 7 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud. Begin by reading the title of this chapter, “City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia.”**

## City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia

Some people in Mesopotamia knew how to read and write. They didn't write on paper. Instead they used reeds to make marks on wet clay. This way of writing is called cuneiform. Having a way to write down important information helped make the Mesopotamian civilization great.



7

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **reeds** are a stiff, hard part of a type of plant that grew in Mesopotamia.

**SUPPORT**—Call attention to each image on page 7, and ask students to describe what they see. For the top image, students should note that this is probably a clay tablet with **cuneiform** writing. Point out that we know what life was like in ancient Mesopotamia because **archaeologists**, people who dig up and study objects that still remain from ancient times, find things such as the clay tablets with cuneiform writing.

For the larger image, students should note that they see a man and a boy who seem to be looking at more cuneiform writing. Explain that, for the most part, only boys learned how to read and write, though occasionally some girls would have learned too.

**SUPPORT**—Explain that people who learned to read and write wrote down important information on clay tablets.

### Ask students the following questions:

**LITERAL**—What tools were used by people who could write?

» They used reeds and wet clay tablets.

**LITERAL**—What was the writing used in Mesopotamia called?

» It was called cuneiform.

## TURN AND TALK:

**EVALUATIVE**—What kind of important information might Mesopotamians have written down? Think about what you have already learned about Mesopotamia and the different jobs people had. What kinds of things might they have wanted to keep track of in writing?

- » Answers may vary but may include the following points: they may have been asked to write down information about food, such as how much was needed to feed all of the people, or who was supposed to do what jobs.

**Note to Teacher:** Point out the advantages of having something in writing as compared to simply talking about important information. (*People are more likely to forget or confuse things that are said, if they are not written down. When something is written, however, everyone can check back to verify the accuracy.*)

**EVALUATIVE**—Can you name some ways that written words are used today to communicate information?

- » Answers may vary but may include: newspapers, online information, comics, magazines, and textbooks.

**Ask students to turn to page 8 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud.**

Kings were powerful leaders. They led armies into battle. They made peace too. This piece of art made from shells and stones shows people bringing special gifts to the king.



Children in Mesopotamia played with toys, just like children do today. What do you think this is?





**SUPPORT**—Call attention to the top image, and point to the king seated on a throne in the top part of the image, second figure on the left. He is the largest person in the picture. This is to show that he is the most important person. Ask students to describe what they see depicted in the image. (People are carrying things that could be food, looking after animals, and playing musical instruments.)

Remind students that the way we know about life in ancient Mesopotamia is because archaeologists have found things from long ago, such as the clay tablets with cuneiform writing and this piece of art, made of shells and stones.

**Ask students the following questions:**

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think the people in the top image were bringing gifts to the king?

- » The king was the ruler and most important person. The people wanted to make the king happy, show him respect, and honor him.

**INFERENTIAL**—Look at the image on the bottom of page 8. Can you think of a toy that children would play with today that is a little like the toy in the image?

- » a car or wagon, or some other wheeled toy

**Ask students to turn to page 9 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud.**

Queens were important too! They helped to make decisions. A queen in Mesopotamia once wore this gold headdress and jewelry. The headdress was made to look like the leaves of a tree.



9

## Ask students the following question:

**INFERENTIAL**—Look at the image on page 9. How can you tell that a queen in Mesopotamia was an important person?

- » A queen in Mesopotamia was an important person because she had gold jewelry that many Mesopotamians probably did not have.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—In ancient Mesopotamia, what was the system of writing called, and why was it important?

- » Cuneiform was the type of writing that was used in ancient Mesopotamia. Cuneiform writing allowed the Mesopotamians to keep track of important information.

**Note to Teacher:** Students may also note that thanks to archaeologists' discovery of clay tablets with cuneiform writing, we know what life was like in ancient Mesopotamia.

## Additional Activities

### Early Writing (RI.1.6)

Activity Page

**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of Early Writing (AP 3.1)



Distribute Early Writing (AP 3.1) to students. Remind students that cuneiform was how ancient Mesopotamians wrote. It used pictures to represent words or parts of words.

AP 3.1

Tell students to look at the pictures on the activity page.

Read the words in the right column aloud. Have students draw a line from each picture to the word it shows.



### Clay Day (SL.1.5)

**Materials Needed:** modeling clay, toothpicks, beads or other colorful small objects in a variety of colors (optional)

Have students make tablets (about an inch thick) from modeling clay and then use toothpicks to create "cuneiform" or pictures of their daily life.

Using these tablets, students can also make mosaics by pressing beads and other colorful small objects into the clay.

Alternatively, if clay is not available, ask students to complete this activity by drawing pictures of their daily life on paper.



### Illustrate City Life (SL.1.5)

**Materials Needed:** blank, unlined paper; drawing utensils (crayons, pencils, markers)

Have students draw pictures showing an activity that took place in Mesopotamian cities, such as a person writing in cuneiform, people making different items, such as pots, baskets, jewelry, and clothing, children playing with toys, people bowing before the king, and so on.

Let students display and describe their completed drawings.

## CHAPTER 4

# King Hammurabi's Written Laws

### Primary Focus Objectives

---

- ✓ Understand that King Hammurabi had a written code of laws. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that writing laws down ensured that all people would know what the laws were and that they were the same for all people. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *laws*. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

### Materials Needed

---

- individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book

### What Teachers Need to Know

---

Besides Sumer, Mesopotamia was home to other city-states, including Babylon, which lay to Sumer's north. About 1750 BCE, Babylon's king, Hammurabi, attacked and conquered many of the Mesopotamian city-states to establish the Babylonian Empire. In an effort to bring order to the vast territory, Hammurabi published what has become known as the Code of Hammurabi. This set of laws dealt with criminal and civil law. In all, there were 282 laws.

They were not new laws, but Hammurabi was responsible for codifying them; that is, he had them collected and written down so that there could be no question about what the laws were. He also made sure that this one set of laws applied to all people of the entire empire, which had a large and diverse population. As king, it was his role to ensure that the "rule of righteousness" was carried out on behalf of the gods.

The purpose of setting down the laws, according to Hammurabi, was to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and evil, and to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak.

You can read more about the Code of Hammurabi and see an image of one of the stone slabs—stela—on which the laws were written, which are now housed in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific links to the Code of Hammurabi can be found.

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

### Introduce Chapter 4: “King Hammurabi’s Written Laws”

---

Review with students what they learned in the previous chapters about life in the city, as well as about the importance of cuneiform writing.

Tell students that in this chapter, they will learn about a Mesopotamian king named Hammurabi, who thought that it was important to write down the laws that all Mesopotamians should follow.

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **laws** are the rules that people living together in a certain place, such as a city, a state, or a country, agree to follow. Point out that if a person does not follow a law, there is usually some kind of punishment for breaking the law. This was also the case with King Hammurabi’s laws.

**SUPPORT**—Ask students to repeat Hammurabi (/hah\*muh\*rah\*bee/) and clap out the four syllables with you to help them remember the king’s name.

### Big Question

---

How might writing down King Hammurabi’s laws have helped the people of ancient Mesopotamia?

### Core Vocabulary

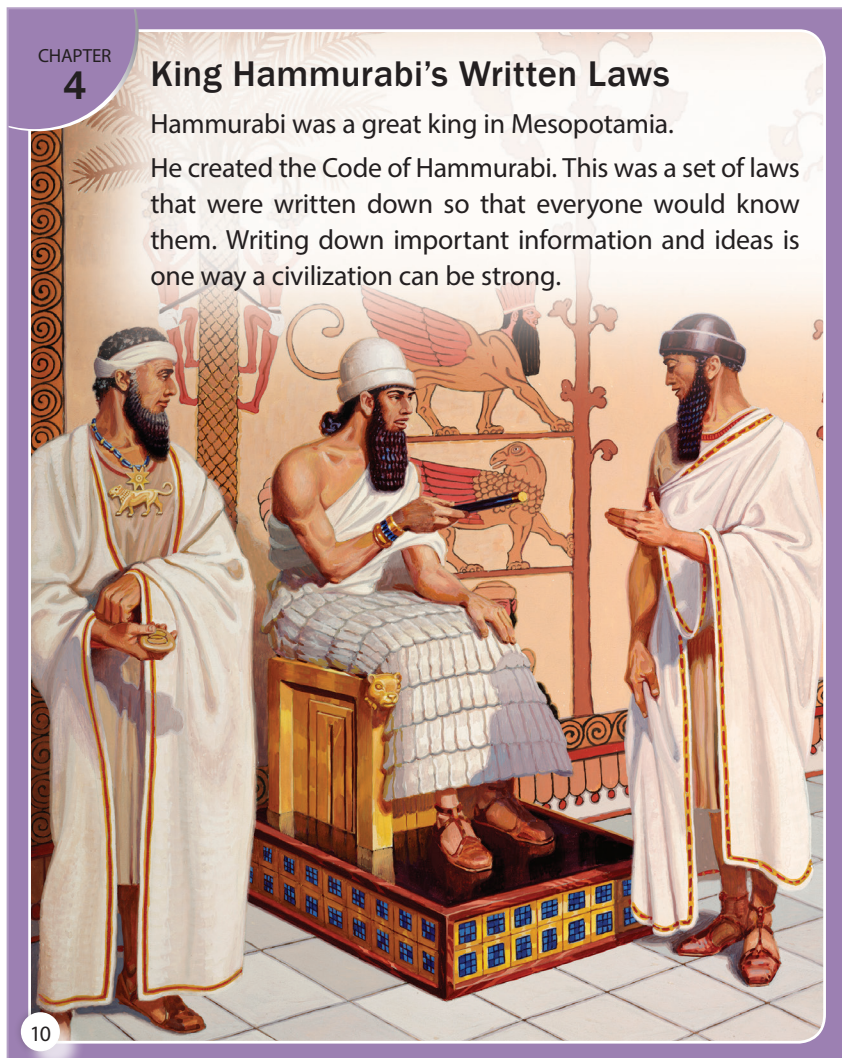
---

**laws**



## Chapter 4: “King Hammurabi’s Written Laws”

Distribute copies of the Student Book. Ask students to turn to page 10 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud. Begin by reading the title of this chapter, “King Hammurabi’s Written Laws.”



**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—Who was Hammurabi?

- » Hammurabi was a king in ancient Mesopotamia.

**INFERENTIAL**—Look at the image on page 10. Who in this picture do you think is King Hammurabi, and how can you tell?

- » King Hammurabi is sitting on the chair, or throne, and the other men are looking at him.

**LITERAL**—What was the Code of Hammurabi?

- » The Code of Hammurabi was a set of laws that Hammurabi had written down.

**INFERENTIAL**—Why do you think Hammurabi wanted to have the laws written down?

- » By having written laws, all people would clearly know what the laws were and what was expected.

**Ask students to turn to page 11 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud.**

King Hammurabi wanted all Mesopotamians to follow the laws. People knew if they broke a law, they would be punished. This is a statue of Hammurabi kneeling down.



11

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What would happen if a person in Mesopotamia broke one of the laws in the Code of Hammurabi?

- » Anyone who broke the law would be punished.

**INFERENTIAL**—Do you think that having the written Code of Hammurabi meant that people were more likely to be treated fairly, according to the law? Explain why or why not.

- » People would probably be treated more fairly: everyone knew what the laws were and what the punishments would be if the laws were not followed.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—How might writing down King Hammurabi’s laws have helped the people of ancient Mesopotamia?

- » Writing down King Hammurabi’s laws meant that everyone in Mesopotamia knew what the laws were and what the punishments would be if the laws were not followed. People knew that the laws and punishments would be the same for everyone.

## Additional Activities

### The Code of Mr./Ms. (teacher’s name) Class (SL.1.1, SL.1.5)

**Materials Needed:** chart paper and marker for the teacher, blank paper, crayons, pens, pencils, or markers for students

**Note to Teacher:** This activity should be conducted over several instructional periods.

Remind students that Hammurabi was considered a great king because he helped to make and write down a code of laws for the people of Mesopotamia to live by. The laws stated how people were to behave and act with one another. Explain that the laws also stated the consequences that would happen if people broke the law.

Here are several representative laws from Hammurabi’s code:

- If a person is too lazy to make the dike (wall) of his field strong, and there is a break in the dike and water destroys his own farmland, that person will make good the grain (tax) that is destroyed. (The person would still have to pay his taxes, which were collected in bags of grain.)
- If a son strikes his father, the son’s hand shall be cut off.
- If a man has committed a robbery and is caught, that man shall be put to death.

Review the examples of some of the laws and the consequences. Explain that while having the written Code of Hammurabi was a great improvement over life in Mesopotamia before written laws, these laws would not be considered perfect by modern standards. Note that the consequences imposed by the Code of Hammurabi were quite harsh by today’s standards.

Now ask students if they can think of and name any modern laws that apply to people living today, as well as any consequences if the law(s) are broken. Write what students say in a T-chart on the board or chart paper, such as the one depicted below:

| Law | Consequence If Broken |
|-----|-----------------------|
|     |                       |

If students have difficulty initially thinking of modern laws and possible consequences, suggest possible scenarios, such as “a car fails to stop at a red light.” Assist students in articulating the law (If the light is red, the car must stop) and possible consequence(s) if the law is not followed (an accident may happen, people could get hurt, the driver of the car that did not stop might get a traffic ticket, etc.).

Another possible modern-day scenario might include discussion of what happens if someone steals or takes something from a store without paying for it.

Discuss with students that one goal of modern laws in the United States is to make sure that there are rules for the protection of everyone, that is, to keep all people safe.

Also, point out that in the United States, modern-day laws are also based on the belief that all people should be treated equally and fairly. Students using the entire Grade 1 CKHG set of materials will encounter this idea again when they learn about the colonies’ fight for independence from Great Britain.

If you have not already posted a list of simple classroom rules, work with students to brainstorm a possible set of rules for your classroom. Start out by asking students to think about what rules might be necessary to keep all students safe, such as, “Walk when you are in the classroom or hallway.” If students suggest a rule stated as a negative, for example, “Don’t run,” guide students in restating the rule in a positive manner.

Next ask students to think about what rules may be needed to help the classroom run smoothly as a community, for example, what rules might be needed for talking out loud, taking turns, and using the bathroom.

Then ask students to think about how they want to be treated by fellow students, as well as by the teacher, guiding them in articulating any rules about being treated equally and fairly that they think would be good to have.

As you print the rules on chart paper, talk about how writing down the rules so that everyone can refer to them helps ensure that everyone knows what the rules are. Having written rules may also help prevent arguments, because if anyone forgets or disagrees about what the rules are, everyone can look back at the written rules.

If time permits, you may also want to discuss and write down some possible consequences if rules are broken and not followed.

Distribute a blank piece of paper to each student. Ask students to draw a picture of a stone slab. Tell students to choose one rule—perhaps the rule they personally think is the most important for their classroom—and show that rule/law on their slab, illustrating it with a picture. Display the classroom rules and drawings prominently within the classroom.



## CHAPTER 5

# Gods, Goddesses, and Temples

### Primary Focus Objectives

---

- ✓ Understand that Mesopotamians went to temples to ask different gods and goddesses for help in their daily lives. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand that ancient Mesopotamians told stories or myths about different gods, goddesses, and other heroes, including a king named Gilgamesh. (SL.1.2, SL.1.3)
- ✓ Understand the meaning of the following domain-specific vocabulary: *temples, gods, goddesses, ruins* and *half-god*. (L.1.4, L.1.5)

### Materials Needed

---

- individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book

### What Teachers Need to Know

---

Religious beliefs and practices played an important role in the lives of the ancient Mesopotamians. With limited means to explain naturally occurring phenomena, ancient people often interpreted what was happening in the world around them as the result of actions by various gods and goddesses. For example, according to Mesopotamian religious beliefs, storms were caused by the god Ishkur (sometimes called Adad). Other deities were associated with each Mesopotamian city. The temple in each city was built as the dwelling place for the patron god or goddess of that city. Offerings of food were made daily by the priests who tended the temple.

Myths served a similar purpose in ancient Mesopotamia. Today, myths are read as stories, offering a tale of a particular god or hero. But for the ancients, they were stories with a purpose, and these stories often explained cultural, religious, or scientific phenomena. Myths could also provide explanations of a people's origins and offer ethical guidelines to follow.

One series of Mesopotamian myths describes Gilgamesh, who is said to be a half-god (demigod) who built the city walls of Uruk and defended its people, as well as performed other epic feats. The earliest references to Gilgamesh were found in cuneiform on clay tablets. Historians now believe that the Gilgamesh myths are based on a king who may actually have lived in ancient Mesopotamia.

## THE CORE LESSON

### Introduce Chapter 5: “Gods, Goddesses, and Temples”

---

**Distribute copies of the Student Book, and ask students to turn to page 5. Remind students that they discussed this image several days ago, noting at the time that the large, tall building in the center must have been important in the lives of the ancient Mesopotamians. Remind students that they also speculated about what the building may have been used for.**

**Now ask students to turn to page 12 of the Student Book, and point out that the top image is the same kind of building. Read the title of the chapter, “Gods, Goddesses, and Temples,” aloud, and explain that buildings like the one in the image are called **temples**.**

Explain that long, long ago, people didn’t understand why many things happened, such as why it rained, why it got dark at night, or why the sun appeared every morning.

Tell students that the ancient Mesopotamians believed that there were **gods** and **goddesses** who had superpowers and were in charge of what happened. They believed they should go to the temple to ask the gods and goddesses to be good to them.

Tell students that in this chapter, they will learn about the gods and goddesses of Mesopotamia.

### Big Question

---

What did the people of Mesopotamia believe their gods and goddesses could do?

### Core Vocabulary

---

**temples**    **gods**    **goddesses**    **ruins**    **half-god**

## Chapter 5: “Gods, Goddesses, and Temples”

Ask students to look at the images on page 12 of the Student Book as you read aloud to find out more about the gods, goddesses, and temples of ancient Mesopotamia.

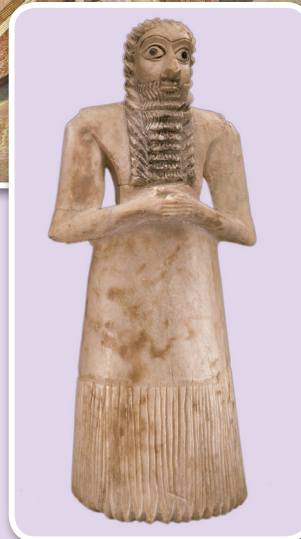
### CHAPTER 5

## Gods, Goddesses, and Temples

In ancient Mesopotamia, people believed in many gods and goddesses. Temples were places where people went to pray to the gods and goddesses.



They also asked the gods and goddesses to help them. This is a statue of a person asking a god for help. You see, people believed that the gods and goddesses could make good and bad things happen.



12

**Ask students the following questions:**

**LITERAL**—What were temples used for in ancient Mesopotamia?

- » Temples were places where the ancient Mesopotamians went to pray to the gods and goddesses and ask for help.

**LITERAL**—What did ancient Mesopotamians believe about the gods and goddesses?

- » They believed the gods and goddesses could make good and bad things happen.

**Ask students to turn to page 13 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud.**

Because the gods and goddesses were thought to be so powerful, people built great temples to them.

This is a photograph of the ruins of the Temple of Ur. Thousands of people would have gone to this temple. It still stands today in the modern-day country of Iraq.



**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that **ruins** are what is left of a building after a very long time. The building may start to fall apart, so the ruins do not look exactly like the building did when it was first built.

**SUPPORT**—Tell students that Mesopotamian temples had a special shape. (The temples often had different levels and stairways.) Each Mesopotamian city had a temple to one special god or goddess.

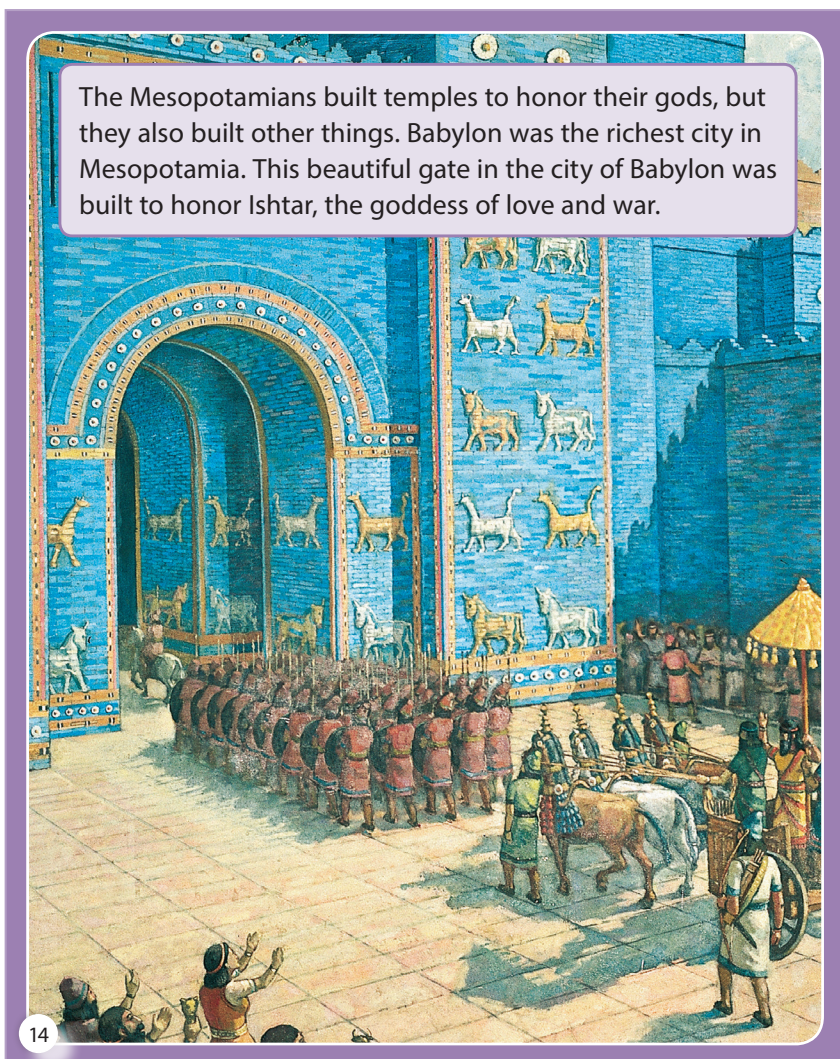
**Ask students the following question:**

**TURN AND TALK**—Look at the image on page 13. How would you describe a Mesopotamian temple?

- » Answers may vary, but may include one or more the following: it looks like a very tall building; different parts of the building have different shapes, for example, rectangular, triangular, and circular shapes; and there appear to be stairs on the side of the building so that people could climb to the top.



Ask students to turn to page 14 of the Student Book and look at the image as you read aloud.



Ask students the following questions:

**TURN AND TALK**—Look at the image on page 14 and talk about what you see.

- » Answers may vary but may include one or more the following: a large, blue wall decorated with pictures of some animals; an opening or gate in the wall so that people can enter the city; and a group of soldiers getting ready to march through the gate.

**LITERAL**—What was the Ishtar Gate?

- » The Ishtar Gate was built by the city of Babylon to honor the god Ishtar.

Ask students to turn to page 15 of the Student Book and look at the images as you read aloud.

People in Mesopotamia told stories about how strong and brave one of their kings was. His name was King Gilgamesh. They also showed his bravery in pictures.



The stories and pictures tell that King Gilgamesh was so strong that he could defeat a lion. King Gilgamesh did so many amazing things; he was thought to be a half-god.

15

**CORE VOCABULARY**—Explain that a **half-god** is someone who is “part person and part god” with some superpowers.

Ask students the following question:

**LITERAL**—What was one of the stories that the ancient Mesopotamians told about King Gilgamesh?

» They said he was so strong and brave that he was able to beat a lion.



## CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING: BIG QUESTION

**TURN AND TALK**—What did the people of Mesopotamia believe their gods and goddesses could do?

» They believed the gods and goddesses were in charge of what happened and that they could make good and bad things happen.

# Teacher Resources

## **Culminating Activity: *Mesopotamia***

- Rap Song Review of Ancient Mesopotamia 46
- My Book About Mesopotamia 47

## **Unit Assessment: *Mesopotamia***

- Unit Assessment Questions: *Mesopotamia* 57
- Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *Mesopotamia* 59

## **Performance Task: *Mesopotamia***

- Performance Task Activity: *Mesopotamia* 62
- Performance Task Scoring Rubric 63

## **My Passport**

- Directions for Making My Passport 64
- Introducing My Passport to Students 65
- My Passport Activity for *Mesopotamia* 66

## **Activity Pages**


- Letter to Family (AP 1.1) 67
- World Map (AP 1.2) 68
- Map of Mesopotamia (AP 2.1) 69
- Early Writing (AP 3.1) 70

## **Answer Key: *Mesopotamia*—Unit Assessment and Activity Pages 71**

## Culminating Activity: *Mesopotamia*

### Rap Song Review of Ancient Mesopotamia

**Materials Needed:** internet access, capability to display the video or project the sound

 **Background for Teachers:** This activity is based on a rap-style song or chant, which you should preview before presenting it to the class. The “Ancient Mesopotamia Song by Mr. Nicky” reviews many of the key vocabulary terms and concepts from the unit, but it also includes some information that students are not expected to learn, for example, references to the kingdom of Sumer (located in southern Mesopotamia), to King Sargon (the first ruler of Akkad, a Mesopotamian region located north of Sumer), and to the Akkadians (Mesopotamian people from Akkad). However, if students have questions about what and whom these lyrics refer to, feel free to offer the preceding brief explanations.

Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the song may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

Tell students that you are going to review what they learned about Mesopotamia, starting with a rap song accompanied by a video. Ask students to listen and watch carefully to see if they recognize places, people, or things that they have been learning about in this unit. Play the “Ancient Mesopotamia Song” from start to finish without interruption, encouraging students to clap along to the beat and to join in saying some of the lyrics that repeat throughout the song, such as the “Euphrates River.”

Play the song a second time, pausing periodically to discuss images and lyrics that students have learned about and to explain the following terms as they occur:

- **irrigate:** to bring water to a dry area, such as using water from the canals and ditches dug by the Mesopotamians and filled with water from the rivers
- **archaeologists:** scientists who study what ancient peoples left behind, such as ruins of buildings and temples, cuneiform written on clay tablets, jewelry, etc. Explain that many of the objects pictured in their books, such as the clay cuneiform tablets, the gold headdress of an ancient queen, the the statue of Hammurabi asking the gods for help, and the stone slab of the Code of Hammurabi, were discovered by archaeologists.
- **excavation:** a place where scientists dig up objects from ancient times

After playing the song, ask students to share what they remember about the following terms:

- Euphrates River
- Tigris River
- a civilization
- cuneiform
- Hammurabi



**Materials Needed:** sufficient copies of My Book About Mesopotamia (see pages 49–56 of this Teacher Guide) and crayons for each student, stapler

**Note to Teacher:** To save instructional time, you may want to preassemble and staple a book for each student before class.

Distribute a copy of My Book About Mesopotamia and crayons to each student. Explain that this is a mini-book version of the Student Book that they have been using in class.

Tell students that they will have a chance to personalize the cover of the book by writing their name and drawing a picture on the cover. Ask students to think about the different things that they have learned about Mesopotamia that they might draw on the cover. Prompt students, if needed, to consider drawing any of the following images:

- the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers
- a farmer in his or her fields
- a Mesopotamian city
- a clay tablet with cuneiform writing (students may want to refer to page 7 of their Student Book)
- a temple

Allow students approximately ten to fifteen minutes to draw their cover.

Then divide students into five groups. Assign one chapter to each group of students, telling students that, with the members of their group, they should look at just their chapter images and quietly talk about what is depicted and what they heard read aloud. Tell students that they will have about five minutes to talk to one another in a small group and then you will call the entire class back together, asking one member from each group to explain their chapter to the rest of the class.

All students should follow along in their own book as the images and pages for each chapter are discussed.

Prompt and elaborate on what students say about each chapter to make sure the following points are made:

### Chapter 1

- Mesopotamians became good at farming, and people began to live near one another.
- Before farming, people had to move around frequently from place to place to hunt animals and gather wild plants.
- Mesopotamia was an ancient civilization that had cities with buildings, roads, and gardens.
- More and more people came to live in the cities.

### Chapter 2

- Mesopotamian kings were powerful and protected cities, people, and farmland.
- Mesopotamia was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
- The land between the two rivers was good for farming.

- The rivers flooded and carried rich soil into the farmers' fields.
- The cities were walled for protection.
- In the cities, people had many different jobs.

### Chapter 3

- Some people learned to write in cuneiform on clay tablets.
- Kings were powerful leaders, and queens were important too.
- Queens helped to make decisions and wore fancy gold jewelry.

### Chapter 4

- Hammurabi was an important king in one of the cities of Mesopotamia. He had the laws written down so that people would know what the laws were. These laws are called the Code of Hammurabi.

### Chapter 5

- The Mesopotamians believed that there were many gods and goddesses who could make good and bad things happen.
- People went to temples to pray to the gods and goddesses and ask them for help.
- People in the city of Babylon built a beautiful blue gate at the entrance to their city to honor the goddess Ishtar.
- People in Mesopotamia told stories about a brave and strong king called Gilgamesh who was a half-god.

Tell students that they may take their book home. Encourage students to talk about the book at home with their family in the same way that they have in class.

**My Book**

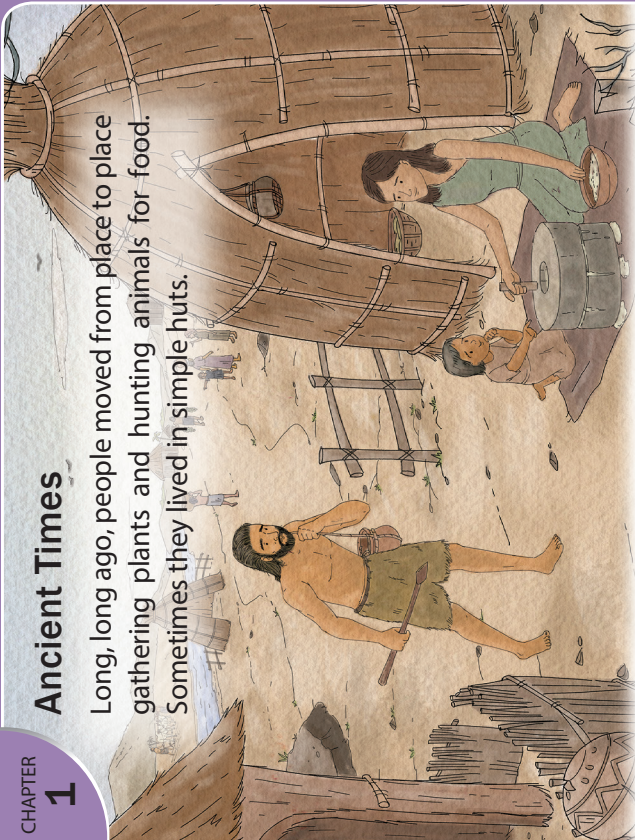
**About**

**Mesopotamia**

**by** \_\_\_\_\_

## Ancient Times

Long, long ago, people moved from place to place gathering plants and hunting animals for food. Sometimes they lived in simple huts.



Over time, people learned to farm. They grew plants that could be eaten as food. Slowly, groups of people began to live together.



2

The ancient Mesopotamians became so good at farming that some people had time to do other things. They built cities that had buildings, streets, and gardens. Mesopotamian kings and queens lived in these beautiful cities, along with other people. The Mesopotamians created a great civilization.

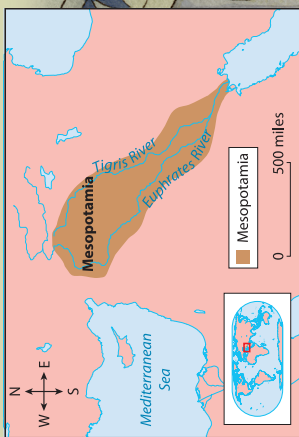


3



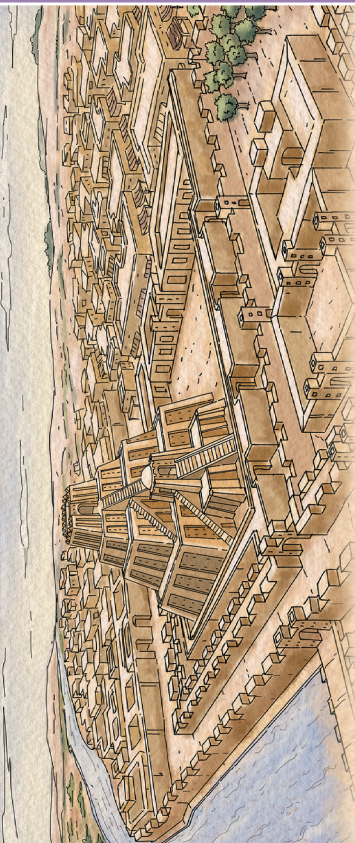
## The Land Between Two Rivers

The name Mesopotamia means “between the rivers.” The land of Mesopotamia lay between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Because there was water nearby, the land was good for farming. Farmers grew the food that fed the people of Mesopotamia, including those who lived in the cities.

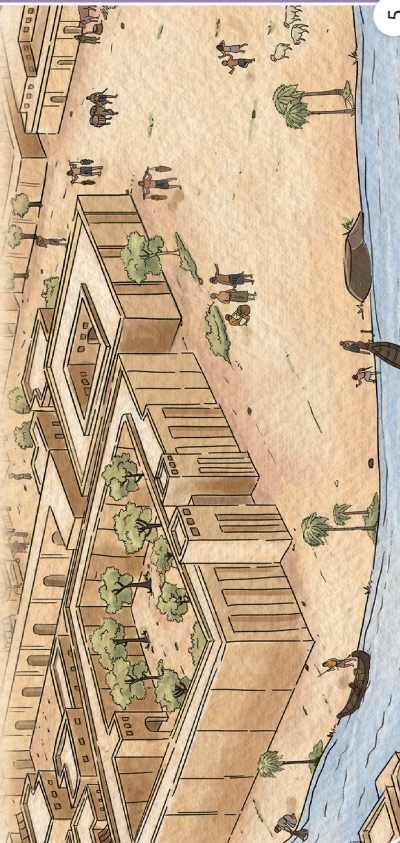


The kings of Mesopotamia were in charge of the cities. Their job was to protect the cities, the people, and the farmland from enemies.

Many of the cities in Mesopotamia were built with walls around them for protection. This is what a walled city would have looked like long ago.



People had many different kinds of jobs in the cities of Mesopotamia. Some people, called craftsmen, made pots, baskets, clothes, and jewelry. Others carried people by boat from place to place.





The farmers grew food in the fields outside the city walls. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were important. Sometimes the rivers flooded. The floodwater carried rich soil into the fields that was good for growing plants. At other times, when there wasn't enough rain for the plants, river water was brought to the fields.



6

### CHAPTER 3

## City Life in Ancient Mesopotamia

Some people in Mesopotamia knew how to read and write. They didn't write on paper. Instead they used reeds to make marks on wet clay. This way of writing is called cuneiform. Having a way to write down important information helped make the Mesopotamian civilization great.



7



Kings were powerful leaders. They led armies into battle. They made peace too. This piece of art made from shells and stones shows people bringing special gifts to the king.



Children in Mesopotamia played with toys, just like children do today. What do you think this is?



8

Queens were important too! They helped to make decisions. A queen in Mesopotamia once wore this gold headdress and jewelry. The headdress was made to look like the leaves of a tree.



9



## King Hammurabi's Written Laws

Hammurabi was a great king in Mesopotamia.

He created the Code of Hammurabi. This was a set of laws that were written down so that everyone would know them. Writing down important information and ideas is one way a civilization can be strong.



10

King Hammurabi wanted all Mesopotamians to follow the laws. People knew if they broke a law, they would be punished. This is a statue of Hammurabi kneeling down.



11



## Gods, Goddesses, and Temples

In ancient Mesopotamia, people believed in many gods and goddesses. Temples were places where people went to pray to the gods and goddesses.



They also asked the gods and goddesses to help them. This is a statue of a person asking a god for help. You see, people believed that the gods and goddesses could make good and bad things happen.

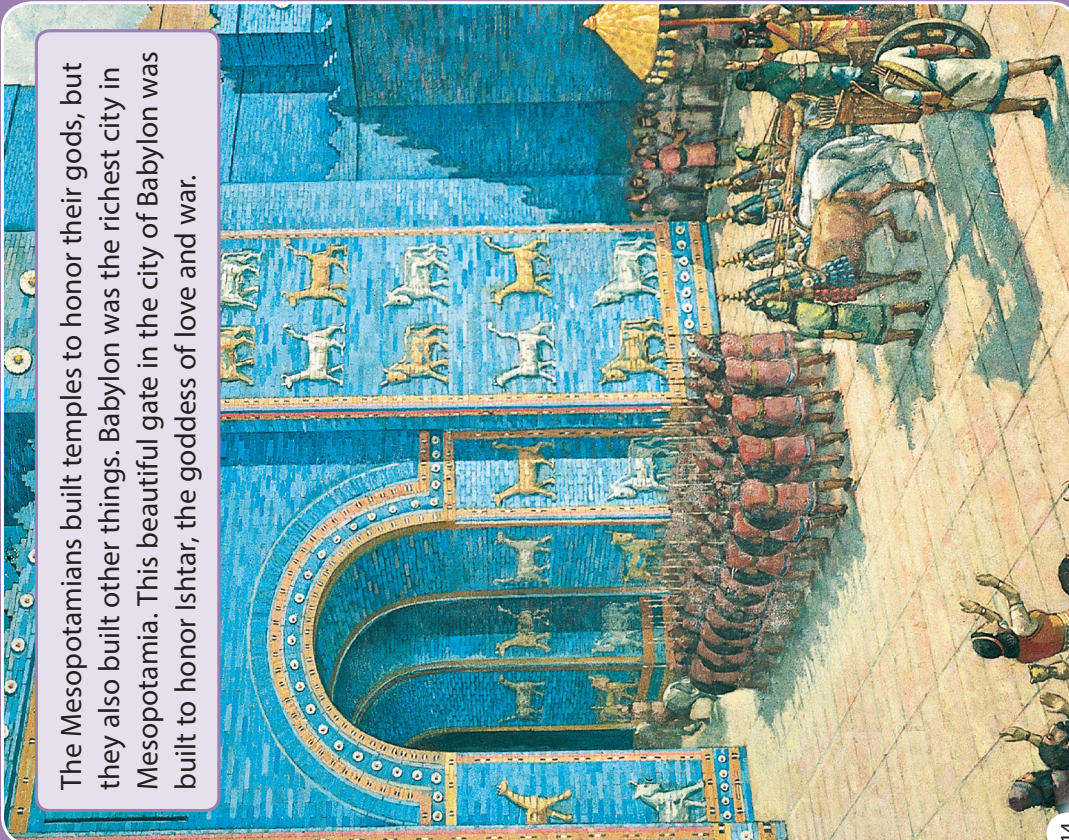
Because the gods and goddesses were thought to be so powerful, people built great temples to them.

This is a photograph of the ruins of the Temple of Ur. Thousands of people would have gone to this temple. It still stands today in the modern-day country of Iraq.





The Mesopotamians built temples to honor their gods, but they also built other things. Babylon was the richest city in Mesopotamia. This beautiful gate in the city of Babylon was built to honor Ishtar, the goddess of love and war.



14

People in Mesopotamia told stories about how strong and brave one of their kings was. His name was King Gilgamesh. They also showed his bravery in pictures.



The stories and pictures tell that King Gilgamesh was so strong that he could defeat a lion. King Gilgamesh did so many amazing things; he was thought to be a half-god.

15

## Unit Assessment Questions: *Mesopotamia*

---

**Make sufficient copies of the Student Answer Sheet for each student; see pages 59–61 of this Teacher Guide. Read each question or sentence below aloud with the answer choices. Instruct students to point to each picture on the answer sheet as you read the choice aloud. Reread the question or sentence and answer choices aloud a second time, and tell students to circle the picture that shows the correct answer.**

1. What did the Mesopotamians create?
  - a) a lion
  - b) a mountain
  - c) a great civilization
2. Mesopotamia was located \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) on the top of a mountain called Ur
  - b) in North America
  - c) between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
3. The cities of Mesopotamia were ruled by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) a gate of Ishtar
  - b) a cuneiform
  - c) a king
4. Thanks to the Tigris and Euphrates, early Mesopotamians were able to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) farm and grow more food on their land
  - b) live in huts
  - c) live in temples
5. Mesopotamians invented a kind of writing called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) a statue
  - b) cuneiform
  - c) a temple
6. These gates led to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) the city of Babylon
  - b) the king
  - c) a god
7. Hammurabi was \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) a famous king in Mesopotamia who made sure that the laws were written down
  - b) a famous city in Mesopotamia
  - c) a famous queen in Mesopotamia who was known for her gold jewelry

- 8.** Who was so strong he could defeat a lion?
- a)** Gilgamesh
  - b)** Hammurabi
  - c)** a farmer



Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: Mesopotamia

1.

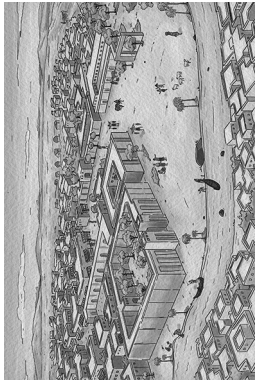


a.

b.



c.

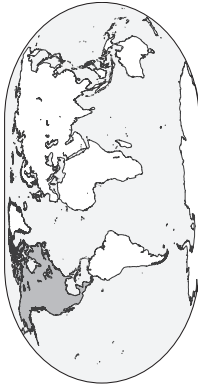


2.

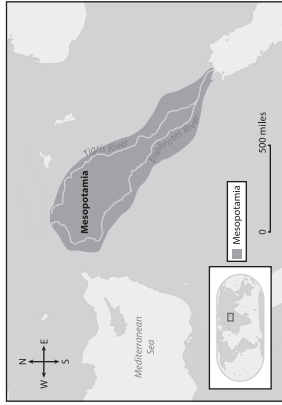


a.

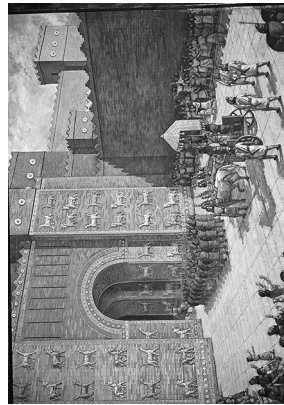
b.



c.



3.

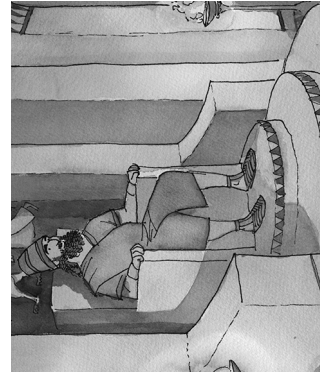


a.

b.



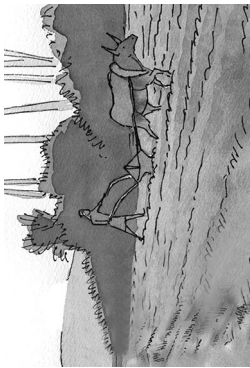
c.



Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *Mesopotamia*

4.

a.



b.



c.



5.

a.



b.

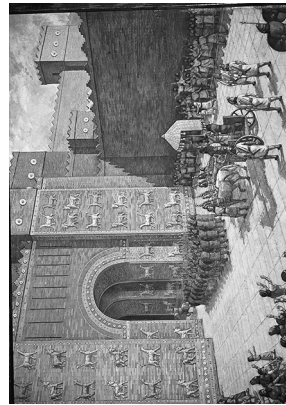


c.

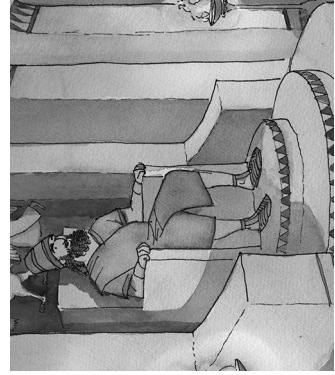


6.

a.



b.



c.



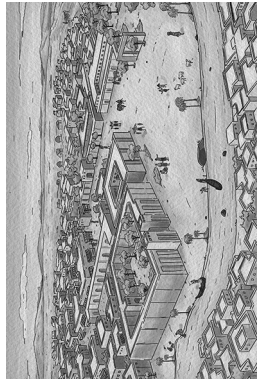
Unit Assessment Student Answer Sheet: *Mesopotamia*

7.

a.



b.



c.



8.

a.



b.



c.





## Performance Task: *Mesopotamia*

---

**Materials Needed:** four blank 5" x 8" index cards per student, pencils, assorted thin-tipped colored markers, individual student copies of *Mesopotamia* Student Book

**Teacher Directions:** In this unit, students learned about ancient Mesopotamia—its location between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers and its emergence as an early, and advanced, civilization. They learned that Mesopotamian cities were busy places, with buildings and roads and a large temple at the center of the city, and that a wall surrounded the entire city for protection. They also learned that the Mesopotamians invented a form of writing called cuneiform that was used to record the things that people bought, sold, or traded, as well to record taxes paid, laws, and stories.

Ask students to reflect back on what they learned during this unit by flipping through the pages of the Student Book. Tell students to imagine they are traveling back in time to visit ancient Mesopotamia. They will share the sights, sounds, and smells of this ancient, foreign land with their friends and family back home by creating four different postcards on 5" x 8" index cards. Remind students that the postcards are like condensed versions of large travel posters. They should show the most important or most interesting details about ancient Mesopotamia. Students should identify on their postcards the most important aspects of ancient Mesopotamia that they have learned about, which make it an exciting place to visit and study.

Have students draw images of ancient Mesopotamia on one side of the card and dictate a brief message about ancient Mesopotamia on the other.

**Note to Teacher:** We suggest that you allocate two instructional periods for the completion of this performance-based assessment. Students will work at different paces. The teacher should circulate throughout the room and be available to discuss each card and take dictation as individual students finish each postcard.

Prompt each student to talk about his or her drawing by saying, "Tell me about what you drew and what it tells about life in ancient Mesopotamia." It is not necessary for the teacher to write verbatim what the student says, but rather to capture bullet points that can later be used with the Performance Assessment Rubric that follows.

## Performance Task Scoring Rubric

**Note to Teacher:** Students should be evaluated on the basis of their postcard drawings, along with what they say that they have drawn and why, using the rubric.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Above Average</b> | <p>Student demonstrates strong understanding of ancient Mesopotamia, drawing and describing any four of the following images/details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mesopotamia was an ancient civilization that had cities with buildings, roads, and gardens.</li><li>• Mesopotamia was located between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. It was also called the land “between the rivers.”</li><li>• The Euphrates and Tigris Rivers were important: when the rivers flooded, they left behind rich soil, and farmers used the river water to grow the crops they planted. Farmers could grow more food and feed more people, so more and more people came to live and work in the Mesopotamian cities.</li><li>• The different cities in Mesopotamia were ruled by different kings.</li><li>• The Mesopotamians believed that there were powerful gods and goddesses who could help people and protect them from bad things that happened in the world.</li><li>• They built tall temples, and people came to the temples to worship the gods.</li><li>• One Mesopotamian myth told the story about a brave and strong king named Gilgamesh. He was a half-god who was able to defeat a lion.</li><li>• Some people learned to write in cuneiform on clay tablets.</li><li>• Hammurabi was an important king in Mesopotamia. He had the laws carved into stone so that people would know what the laws were. These laws are called the Code of Hammurabi.</li></ul> |
| <b>Average</b>       | <p>Student demonstrates solid understanding of ancient Mesopotamia, drawing and describing three of the images/details listed above.</p>   |
| <b>Adequate</b>      | <p>Student demonstrates a very basic understanding of ancient Mesopotamia, drawing and describing two of the images/details listed above.</p>  |
| <b>Inadequate</b>    | <p>Response is incomplete and demonstrates a minimal understanding of the content in the unit, drawing and describing only one of the images/details listed above.</p>   |

## Directions for Making My Passport

If this is the first Grade 1 CKHG unit you have completed with your students, please download and print the Grade 1 My Passport. Use this link to download the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the passport PDF may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

To save instructional time, prepare a passport for each student in advance. Download and print the Passport PDF pages. Photocopy the pages back to back, according to the specifications on your printer. Staple pages together.





## Introducing My Passport to Students

**Materials Needed:** sufficient folded copies of Grade 1 My Passport for students, pencils, glue sticks, thin-tipped markers\*, and an actual passport (if available).

Use this link to download and print the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to My Passport may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

\*If you prefer, you may take a photograph of each student and print a small copy to distribute to each student instead of having them use the markers to draw a picture of themselves.

Tell students that when people travel, especially to countries outside of the United States, they bring a little booklet with them that is called a passport.

Show students an actual passport, if available, as you continue to explain that a passport has many pages inside. On the first page, there is usually a photograph of the person to whom the passport belongs, as well as personal identification information, such as when the person was born and where the person lives. Explain that as people visit each new place/country, they show the page with their identification information to an official and often receive a stamp in their passport to show that they have visited that place.

Explain to students that today they are going to make a pretend passport that they will use as they “time travel” to different places and times in history this year using CKHG. Distribute materials to each student. Examine and discuss the cover the passport.

Have students turn to the first page inside, and tell them that this page has space for their own personal identification information. Explain each portion of this page, guiding students in personalizing their passport by either drawing a picture of themselves or gluing a photograph in the designated space. Guide students in completing the remaining information, such as their name, date of birth, and remaining information.

**SUPPORT**—Provide prompts for students as needed by writing examples of their correct date of birth and how to spell the name of their town, state, country, and continent.

Next, have students examine the remaining passport pages as you read the titles at the top of each page. Explain that each page lists the name of one of the “places they will visit” as they use the Grade 1 CKHG materials this year. Tell students that once they finish each unit, they will have a chance to place small pictures of the place they visited in their passport as a reminder, or souvenir, of each place they visited.

Collect all passports, and keep them in a safe place until you are ready to have students complete the passport page for Mesopotamia.

## My Passport Activity for *Mesopotamia*

**Materials Needed:** personalized copies of Grade 1 My Passport for each student, sufficient copies of the Mesopotamia Passport Images, pencils, and glue sticks for each student

**Note to Teacher:** Please download and print the Mesopotamia Passport Images. Use this link to download and print the CKHG Online Resources for this unit, where the specific link to the Mesopotamia Passport Images may be found:

[www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources](http://www.coreknowledge.org/ckhg-online-resources)

You will need to print sufficient copies of each page and then cut the images apart on the dotted lines before class.

Tell students that today they will each complete the page in their passport that is about Mesopotamia. Ask students to turn to page 3 of their passports.

Show students the individual Mesopotamia Passport Images, and ask students to name or describe each image. Explain that you will give each student a copy of every image. Direct students to use their glue sticks to carefully glue each image onto the Mesopotamia page of the passport in whatever order they would like.

As students finish, encourage them to share their passport with a partner, showing and describing the images on the Mesopotamia page and what they represent. Suggest students talk to one another about what they saw and what they liked best during their time travel to Mesopotamia.

## Activity Page 1.1

## Use with Chapter 1

## Letter to Family

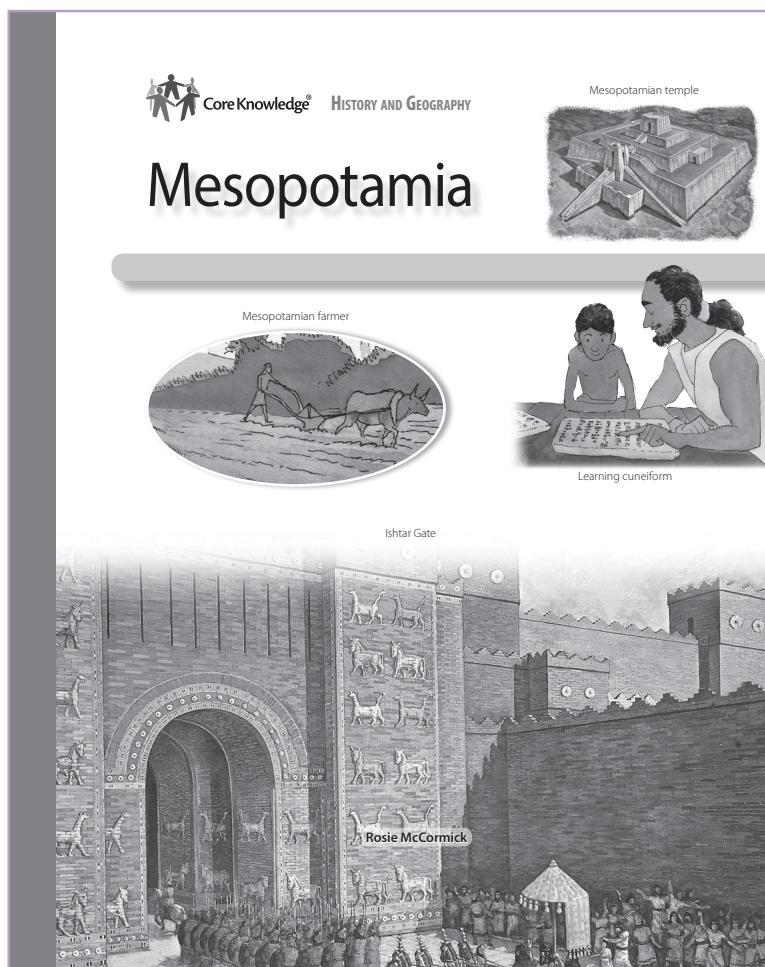
During the next few weeks, as a part of our study of Core Knowledge History and Geography, your child will be learning about the geography and civilization of ancient Mesopotamia, which was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in an area that roughly corresponds to modern-day Iraq. They will learn that Mesopotamia is known as a “civilization,” one of the first places that people began to live together in cities instead of as nomadic hunters and gatherers. The ancient Mesopotamians made significant improvements to early farming, which provided the larger supply of food needed to feed the increasing numbers of people living in settled cities.

They will also learn about the Mesopotamian form of writing known as cuneiform, one of the earliest forms of writing. They will learn, too, about the magnificent temples the Mesopotamians built. In order to fully understand why the temples were built, students will also learn about ancient Mesopotamians’ beliefs in different gods and goddesses, who they believed controlled the everyday happenings in the world, such as rivers flooding or severe droughts.

These beliefs and practices are presented as historical and cultural information in an age-appropriate way rather than in a manner that suggests the value or correctness of any particular set of beliefs. The goal is to build knowledge about life in ancient times and to foster understanding and respect for practices and beliefs that may be different from those with which students are familiar.

Sometimes students have questions regarding how the beliefs or practices they are learning about relate to themselves and their own experiences. In such instances, we will encourage each student to discuss such topics with you. We recognize that the best place to find answers to those types of questions is with your family and the adults at home.

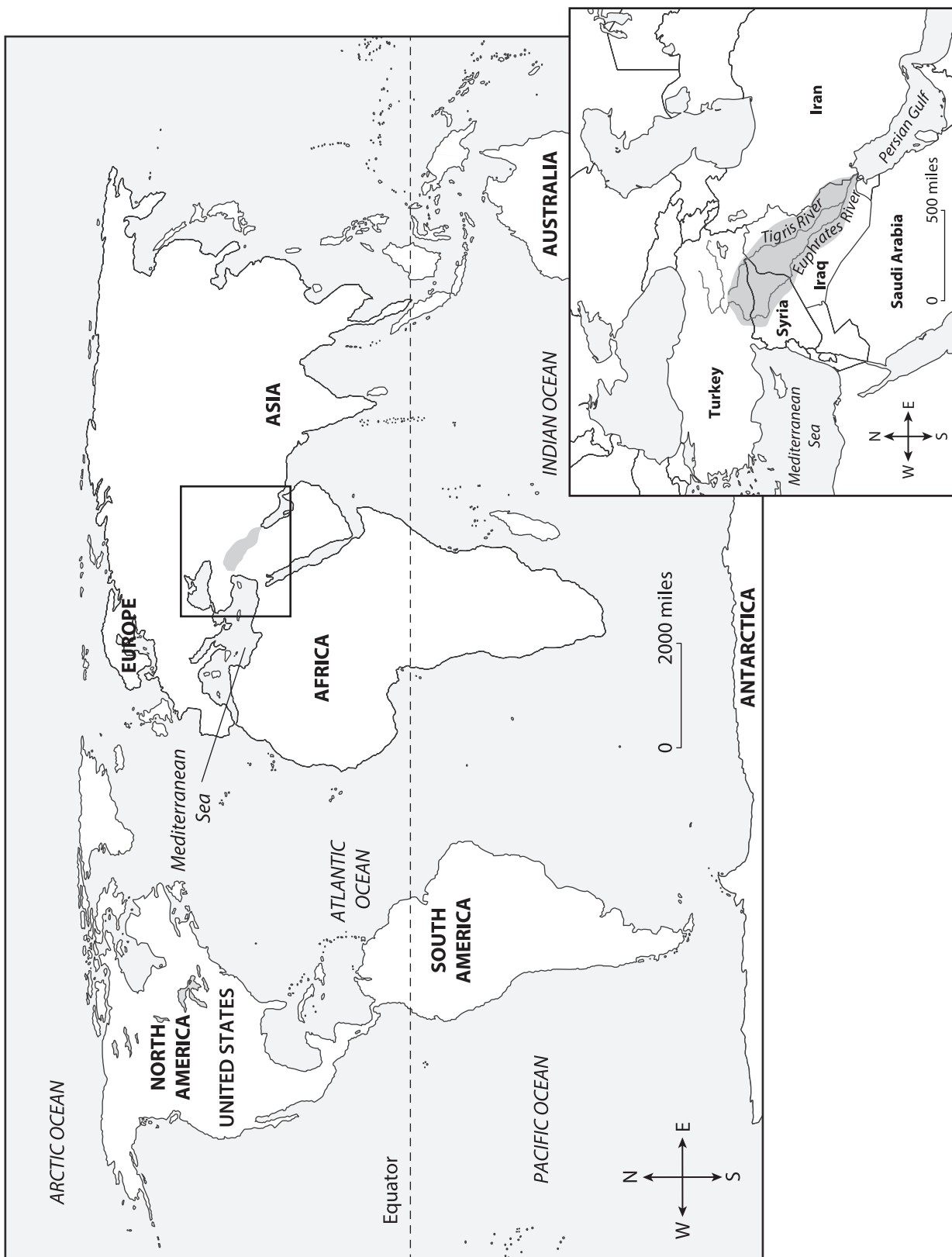
Please let us know if you have any questions.





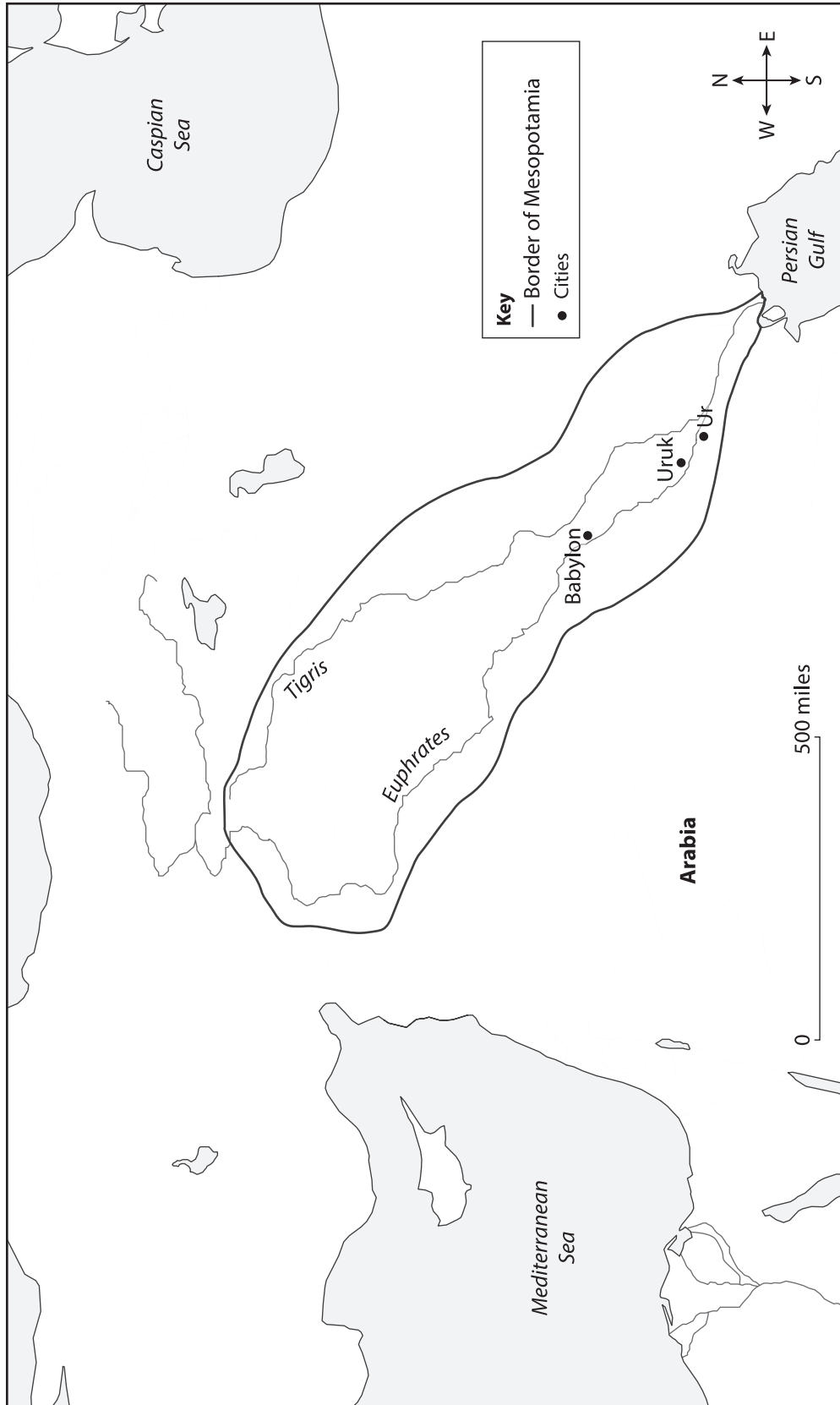
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# World Map



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Map of Mesopotamia**

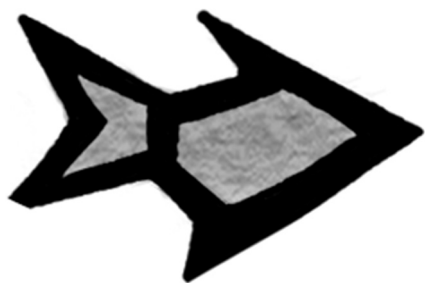
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

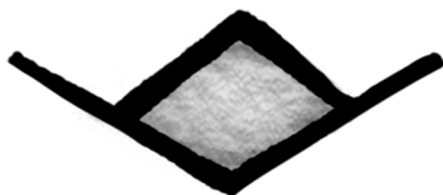
Activity Page 3.1

Use with Chapter 3

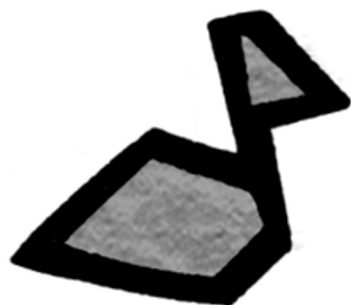
Early Writing



sun



bird



fish



## **Answer Key: *Mesopotamia***

---

### **Unit Assessment**

**(pages 57–58)**

**1. c 2. c 3. c 4. a 5. b 6. a 7. a 8. a**

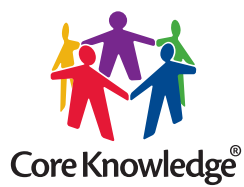
### **Activity Pages**

**Early Writing (AP 3.1)**

**(page 70)**

The symbols, in order, are: fish, sun, bird





**CKHG<sup>TM</sup>**  
Core Knowledge **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY<sup>TM</sup>**

**Series Editor-in-Chief**

E. D. Hirsch Jr.

**Editorial Directors**

Linda Bevilacqua and Rosie McCormick

## Subject Matter Experts

Nadine Brundrett, Department of Classics, Brock University

### Illustration and Photo Credits

Administrative clay tablet in cuneiform script with count of goats and rams, from Tell Telloh (ancient Ngirsu), Iraq / De Agostini Picture Library / G. Dagli Orti / Bridgeman Images: 29, 52, 60e

DeAgostini/SuperStock: Cover A, 14a, 41, 55, 67a

Hammurabi, king of Babylon, praying before a sacred tree, c.1750 BC (bronze and gold) / Louvre-Lens, France / Bridgeman Images: 36, 54, 60d, 61a, 61e

Illustration of the Ishtar Gate in ancient Babylon (w/c on paper) / Private Collection / De Agostini Picture Library / C. Sappa / Bridgeman Images: Cover D, 14d, 43, 56, 59g, 60g, 67d

Iraq: The Standard of Ur (also known as the 'Battle Standard of Ur', or the 'Royal Standard of Ur') is a Sumerian artifact excavated from the Royal Cemetery in the ancient city of Ur, located in modern-day Iraq to the south of Baghdad (c.2250 BCE) / Pictures from History / Bridgeman Images: 30, 53

Jed Henry: Cover B, Cover C, 14b, 14c, 15, 20, 22, 29, 50, 51, 52a, 52b, 59i, 60a, 60h, 61f, 67b, 67c

King Hammurabi seated on the throne instructs a vizier while his astrologer listens (colour litho), Herget, Herbert M. (1885–1950) / National Geographic Image Collection / Bridgeman Images: 35, 54

National Geographic/SuperStock: 44, 56, 59a

OpenClipart-Vectors/Pixabay: 59b, 59d

Seal depicting a bearded hero, "Gilgamesh", kneeling and holding an outstretched lion above his head / Werner Forman Archive / Bridgeman Images: 44, 56, 61d

Silvio Fiore/SuperStock: 42, 55, 60c, 60f

Standing Male Worshiper, Early Dynastic, c.2900–2600 B.C. (gypsum alabaster, shell, black limestone, bitumen), Sumerian / Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA / Bridgeman Images: 41, 55

Sumerian headdress worn by Queen Shub-ad, discovered in Ur by Mr C. Leonard Woolley and published in the 'Illustrated London News', 1928 (colour litho), English School, (20th century) / Private Collection / Bridgeman Images: 31, 53, 61c

Toy, Mesopotamia / National Museum of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon / Photo © Zev Radovan / Bridgeman Images: 30, 53

Within this publication, the Core Knowledge Foundation has provided hyperlinks to independently owned and operated sites whose content we have determined to be of possible interest to you. At the time of publication, all links were valid and operational and the content accessed by the links provided additional information that supported the Core Knowledge curricular content and/or lessons. Please note that we do not monitor the links or the content on such sites on an ongoing basis and both may be constantly changing. We have no control over the links, the content or the policies, information-gathering or otherwise, of such linked sites.

By accessing these third-party sites and the content provided therein, you acknowledge and agree that the Core Knowledge Foundation makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the content of such third-party websites, and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the either the links themselves or the contents of such sites.

If you experience any difficulties when attempting to access one of the linked resources found within these materials, please contact the Core Knowledge Foundation:

Core Knowledge Foundation

801 E. High St.

Charlottesville, VA 22902

Email: [coreknow@coreknowledge.org](mailto:coreknow@coreknowledge.org)



# Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™

Series Editor-in-Chief

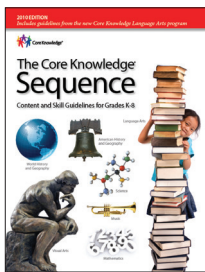
E. D. Hirsch Jr.

## CKHG™

Core Knowledge **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**™

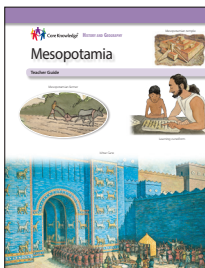
### Mesopotamia

Core Knowledge History and Geography 1



#### What is the Core Knowledge Sequence?

The Core Knowledge Sequence is a detailed guide to specific content and skills to be taught in Grades K–8 in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts. In the domains of world and American history and geography, the *Core Knowledge Sequence* outlines topics that build chronologically or thematically grade by grade.



#### For which grade levels is this book intended?

In general, the content and presentation are appropriate for students in the early elementary grades. For teachers and schools following the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, this book is intended for Grade 1 and is part of a series of **Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY** units of study.

For a complete listing of resources in the  
**Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY** series,  
visit [www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org).

**CKHG™**  
Core Knowledge **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

A comprehensive program in world and American history and geography, integrating topics in civics and the arts, exploring civilizations, cultures, and concepts specified in the Core Knowledge Sequence (content and skill guidelines for Grades K–8)

**Core Knowledge HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY™**

units at this level include:

**Continents, Countries, and Maps**

**Mesopotamia**

**Ancient Egypt**

**Three World Religions**

**Early Civilizations of the Americas**

**The Culture of Mexico**

**Early Explorers and Settlers**

**From Colonies to Independence**

**Exploring the West**

[www.coreknowledge.org](http://www.coreknowledge.org)

**Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™**

**Series Editor-in-Chief**

E. D. Hirsch Jr.

ISBN: 978-1-68380-386-7