

# **Geography of the Fertile Crescent**

# Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent

7000-500 BC



# Chapter 3 Timeline

## CHAPTER EVENTS



**c. 7000 BC**  
Agriculture first develops in Mesopotamia.

**c. 2350–2330 BC**  
Sargon of Akkad conquers Mesopotamia and forms the world's first empire.



**c. 1770 BC**  
Hammurabi of Babylon issues a written code of laws.

**c. 1000 BC**  
Phoenicians trade all around the Mediterranean.



## WORLD EVENTS

**7000 BC**

**c. 3100 BC**  
Menes becomes the first pharaoh of Egypt.

**2750 BC**

**c. 2300 BC**  
The Harappan civilization rises in the Indus Valley.



**2000 BC**

**c. 1500 BC**  
The Shang Dynasty is established in China.

**1250 BC**

**c. 965 BC**  
Solomon becomes king of Israel.



**500 BC**

# Rivers Support the Growth of Civilization

- Early people settled where crops would grow. Crops usually grew well near rivers, where water was available and regular floods made the soil rich.

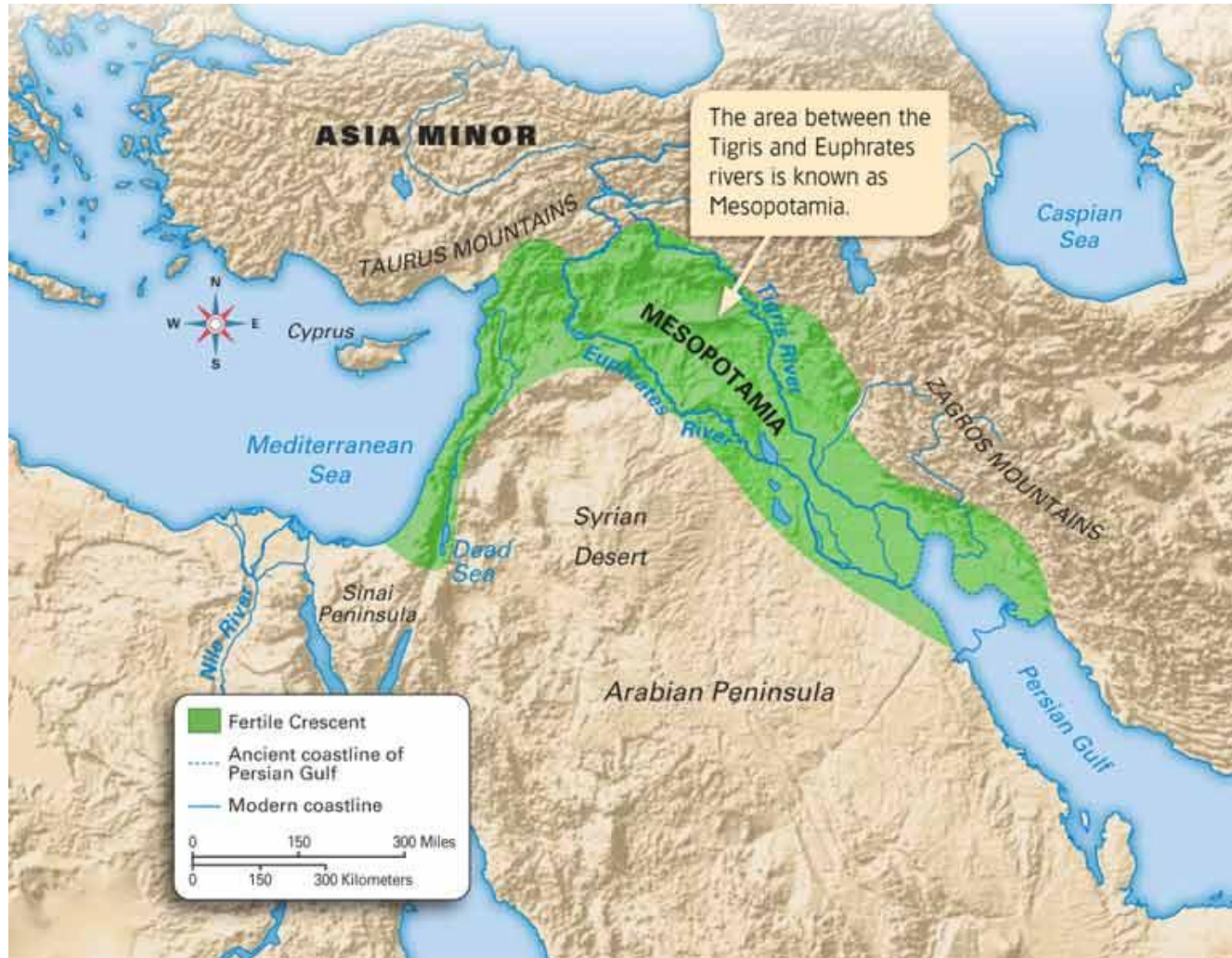


# Fertile Crescent

- Mesopotamia, part of the region known as the **Fertile Crescent** in Southwest Asia, lay between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Every year, floods on the rivers brought **silt**. The fertile silt made the land ideal for farming.



# Fertile Crescent



# Hunter-Gatherer Groups

Hunter-gatherer groups first settled in Mesopotamia more than 12,000 years ago. Over time these people learned how to work together to control floods. They planted crops and grew their own food.



# Farm Settlements

- Farm settlements formed in Mesopotamia as early as 7000 BC. Farmers grew wheat, barley, and other grains. Livestock, birds, and fish were also sources of food.
- Plentiful food led to population growth and villages formed.
- Eventually, these early villages developed into the world's first civilization.

# Farming and Cities

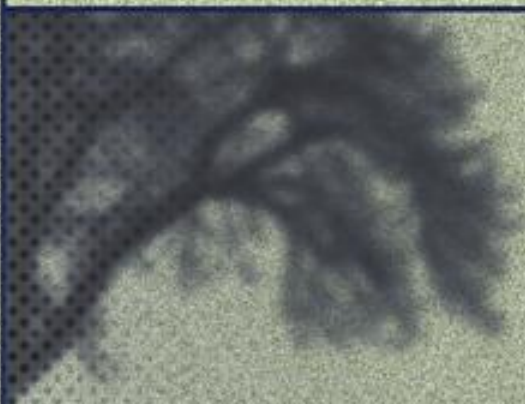
- Early farmers faced the challenge of learning how to control the flow of river water to their fields in both rainy and dry seasons.
- Flooding destroyed crops, killed livestock, and washed away homes.
- When water levels were too low, crops dried up.

# Mud Villages



# Irrigation

To solve their problems, Mesopotamians used **irrigation**. They dug out large storage basins to hold water supplies. Then they dug **canals** that connected these basins to a network of ditches. These ditches brought water to the fields and watered grazing areas for cattle and sheep.



# Irrigation and Cities

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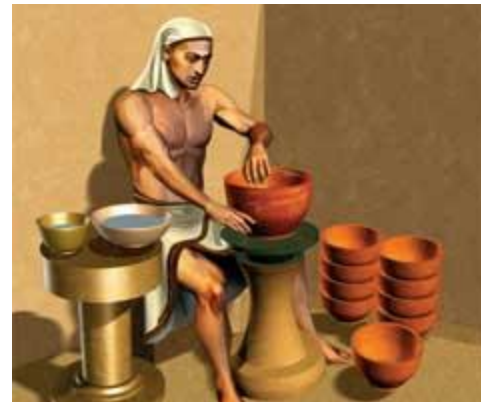
**1.** Early settlements in Mesopotamia were located near rivers. Water was not controlled, and flooding was a major problem.



**2.** Later, people built canals to protect houses from flooding and move water to their fields.



**3.** With irrigation, the people of Mesopotamia were able to grow more food.



**4.** Food surpluses allowed some people to stop farming and concentrate on other jobs, like making clay pots or tools.

# Division of Labor

- Because irrigation made farmers more productive, they produced a **surplus**. Some people became free to do other jobs.
- For the first time, people became craftspersons, religious leaders, and government workers.
- A **division of labor** developed.

# Cities

- Mesopotamian settlements grew in size and complexity. Most people continued to work in farming jobs.
- However, cities became important places. People traded goods in cities.
- Cities became the political, religious, cultural, and economic centers of Mesopotamian civilization.

# River Valley Civilizations

