



# #9947 TIMELINES OF ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS: MESOPOTAMIA 2

FILM IDEAS, INC., 2003  
Grade Level: 8-12  
18 mins.

## DESCRIPTION

The Fertile Crescent nurtured three great ancient civilizations: Sumer, Babylon, and Assyria. Covers Babylon's legacy, especially the Hammurabi Code. Hittites, Kassites, and Elamites followed Babylon but were ultimately defeated by Assyria. Describes Assyria's long-lasting empire, which was eventually conquered by the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and others who rose and fell in power in this land today known as Iraq. Dated information about Saddam Hussein.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Geography—The World in Spatial Terms

- Standard: Knows the location of places, geographic features, and patterns of the environment
  - ◆ Benchmark: Knows the location of physical and human features on maps and globes (e.g., culture hearths such as Mesopotamia, Huang Ho, the Yucatan Peninsula, the Nile Valley; major ocean currents; wind patterns; land forms; climate regions) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)

### Subject Area: World History—Era 2—Early Civilizations and the Rise of Pastoral Peoples, 4000-1000 B

- Standard: Understands the major characteristics of civilization and the development of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley
  - ◆ Benchmark: Understands influences on the social and economic framework of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley (e.g., the characteristics of government and military in Egypt and Mesopotamia and the ways in which central authorities commanded labor and taxes from peasant farmers; how architectural, artistic, technological, and scientific achievements of these civilizations affected the economics of daily life) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)
  - ◆ Benchmark: Understands how written codes and stories reflect social conditions in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley (e.g., how the code

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of Hammurabi illustrated the ethical values, social hierarchy and attitudes, and roles of women in Mesopotamia; how the biblical account of Genesis and the Enuma Elish from Babylon reflect contrasting beliefs) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)

### **Subject Area: World History—Era 3—Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE-300 CE**

- Standard: Understands how Aegean civilization emerged and how interrelations developed among peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia from 600 to 200 BCE
  - ◆ Benchmark: Understands significant military developments of the Persian Empire (e.g., major events of the wars between Persia and the Greek city-states; reasons for Persia's failure to conquer the Aegean region; the growth of and geographic influences on the Persian Empire, from the reign of Cyrus I through the wars with Greece; sources of the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians; the four major battles of the Persian wars) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)
  - ◆ Benchmark: Understands Alexander's achievements as a military and political leader (e.g., reasons for the disintegration of the empire into smaller areas after his rule; the campaigns, battles, and cities founded in Alexander's imperial conquests) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

### **Subject Area: Geography—Human Systems**

- Standard: Understands the forces of cooperation and conflict that shape the divisions of Earth's surface
  - ◆ Benchmark: Understands factors that contribute to cooperation (e.g., similarities in religion, language, political beliefs) or conflict (e.g., economic competition for scarce resources, boundary disputes, cultural differences, control of strategic locations) within and between regions and countries (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)

## **INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

1. To identify where the ancient empire of Mesopotamia was located.
2. To describe the rise and fall of the ancient Babylonian empire and identify important political and cultural developments in Mesopotamia from 2,000 to 1,000 BCE.
3. To explain the various people and countries who ruled in Mesopotamia from 1,000 to 331 BCE and their influences on its culture.
4. To describe modern Mesopotamia.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Known as the “Land In-Between,” Mesopotamia geographically lies between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Over the course of 5,000 years this ancient land gave rise to three remarkable civilizations: the Sumerians, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians.

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The Sumerians became the first Mesopotamian civilization to emerge. Inventions like the wheel, a form of early writing known as "cuneiform," and the development of natural resources all helped to advance Sumerian culture. However, by 2000 BCE the Babylonian Empire began to flourish. A famous Babylonian ruler named Hammurabi expanded trade and commerce and eventually conquered surrounding territories. Following the death of Hammurabi, different rulers and dynasties fought to control the Babylonian Empire. By 1115 BCE the Assyrians led by King Tiglath Pileser I became the next empire to dominate the Mesopotamian region. During their reign, Egypt was successfully invaded and trade routes extended throughout the Mediterranean world. But Assyria, like previous empires, was eventually conquered in 612 BCE by the New Babylonians known as the Chaldeans. Under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar II, the Chaldeans conquered the Hebrews in the city of Jerusalem and built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon which is considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. However, by 539 BCE the New Babylonians became the victims of another formidable foe and eventually became a province of the Persian Empire. But like its historic past the control of Babylon continued to change as both Hellenic and Roman occupation prevailed from 331 BCE to the last century BCE.

Today the land that was once known as Mesopotamia is now called the Republic of Iraq and Kuwait. Those who claimed this ancient land have come and gone, but the innovations first developed by these enduring civilizations, which include: building and farming methods, the wheel, water irrigation, and the development of language, will forever influence the world today.

### VOCABULARY

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Assyrians                  | 11. King Nebuchadnezzar II |
| 2. Babylon                    | 12. Marduk                 |
| 3. Babylonians                | 13. Mesopotamia            |
| 4. BCE                        | 14. Shamash                |
| 5. Chaldeans                  | 15. sheiks                 |
| 6. Elam                       | 16. paradises              |
| 7. Hammurabi                  | 17. Persian Gulf War       |
| 8. Hanging Gardens of Babylon | 18. tongue (language)      |
| 9. Hittites                   | 19. ziggurats              |
| 10. Kassites                  |                            |

### BEFORE SHOWING

1. Locate the area of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, on a world map or globe. Discuss the climate and landforms of the area.
2. Review early history of Mesopotamia. Watch *Timelines of Ancient Civilizations: Mesopotamia 1*, CMP #9946. Discuss.
3. Create and discuss a timeline showing major events in history. Leave lots of room between 2,000 and 331 BCE to add events from the video, either during or after viewing. Include:
  - a. 200 million years ago: Dinosaurs roamed the earth.
  - b. 65 million years ago: Dinosaurs extinct.

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- c. 2 million years ago: Human species walks upright and begins making tools.
- d. 40,000 BCE: Human species first appear in the Mesopotamia area.
- e. 5,000-2,000 BCE: The Sumerians rise to power.
- f. 2,000 BCE: The Babylonians rise to power.
- g. 331 BCE: Alexander the Great conquers.

### DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Consider pausing the video to add significant events to the timeline and review important facts. (See BEFORE SHOWING.)

### AFTER SHOWING

#### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss Hammurabi and his reign in Babylon. What things was he famous for? What was the importance of his code of law?
2. What did the Hittites do in 1600 BCE? How did that affect Babylon?
3. Describe the reign of the Kassites in Babylon. Why were they so successful?
4. Who defeated the Kassites? What kind of conquerors were they?
5. Discuss the rule of the Assyrians. Describe what various kings were famous for. How have we learned about the Assyrian history?
6. Why did some Assyrian kings have paradises?
7. Discuss the influence of astronomers and astrology on these ancient cultures.
8. What was Esarhaddon famous for?
9. Who finally defeated the Assyrians?
10. Describe the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar II. Name several things he was famous for. Describe the new ziggurat and the hanging gardens which he had built.
11. When did Babylon become a province of Persia?
12. Why was Alexander the Great considered a liberator of Babylon? How did he die?
13. Who conquered Babylon in the last century BCE?
14. Describe modern Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91.
15. Discuss the current state of affairs in Iraq and its current leadership.

#### Applications and Activities

1. Review the timeline begun BEFORE SHOWING. Add any additional dates and information gained from the video or from texts. Illustrate the events.
2. Imagine you lived during the time of ancient Mesopotamia. Discuss how life would be different than living in the twenty-first century. Write a story about your experiences.
3. Research and report on one facet of the history of Mesopotamia.
4. Invite an archeologist to visit your school or arrange a class trip to visit them to explain the importance of archeology and ancient Mesopotamia.
5. Discuss the differences and similarities between ancient Mesopotamia and present-day Mesopotamia. Some possible discussion topics are:
  - a. Who is the leader of Iraq and Kuwait today?

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- b. What is and was the primary religion practiced in ancient Mesopotamia and Mesopotamia today?
  - c. What are and were the major industries in existence in ancient Mesopotamia and Mesopotamia today?
  - d. What is and was the primary means of transportation in ancient Mesopotamia and Mesopotamia today?
  - e. What is and was the primary language of ancient Mesopotamia and Mesopotamia today?
6. Identify Mesopotamia on individual maps.
- a. Draw in and label the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.
  - b. Label the Persian Gulf.
  - c. Label famous land features such as the mountains mentioned in the video.
  - d. Identify the famous cities of the Sumerians and other civilizations from that time period.

### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [The Assyrians #3565](#)
- [Timelines of Ancient Civilizations: Mesopotamia I #9946](#)

### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

#### • THE BRITISH MUSEUM: MESOPOTAMIA

<http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/menu.html>

Explore this Web site loaded with information and pictures. Choose "Sumer," "Babylonia," or "Assyria" for more specific culture information. In the section called "Time," find archeological information and see different timelines for six different cultures. Other sections include "Geography," "Gods and Goddesses," and "Writing." All information pieces have unique words hot-linked to a glossary. Worth showing to the whole class.



- **ANCIENT HISTORY SOURCEBOOK**

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook03.html>

Under "Contents," choose a culture and time period to get a list of related links for more information. Most cultures mentioned in the video are covered here.



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- **ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA**

<http://www.ed.psu.edu/k-12/edpgs/su96/meso/mesopotamia.html>

This site is a seventh-grade World History/World Geography unit designed to be used by both students and teachers. It can be used by students as an educational resource supplementary to the traditional social studies textbook, or it can be used by teachers in order to attain important vocabulary terms, vocabulary exercises, a study guide, an example quiz, hands-on activities, and final unit evaluations.