

## Chapter Preview

This chapter will introduce you to the civilizations of an ancient region of the Middle East known as the Fertile Crescent.

### Section 1

Land Between Two Rivers

### Section 2

Fertile Crescent Empires

### Section 3

The Legacy of Mesopotamia

### Section 4

Mediterranean Civilizations

### Section 5

Judaism



### Target Reading Skill

**Clarifying Meaning** In this chapter you will focus on clarifying, or better understanding, the meaning of what you read.

► A shepherd grazes his sheep along the banks of the Euphrates River in Syria.



## The Fertile Crescent

## MAP MASTER<sup>™</sup> Skills Activity



**Location** A region known as the Fertile Crescent stretched in an arc from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. It had many attractions to the people of the ancient world. **Identify** What kinds of geographic features do you notice in the Fertile Crescent? **Apply Information** Which areas of the Fertile Crescent might attract invaders? Explain why.

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# Land Between Two Rivers

## Prepare to Read

### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Find out how geography made the rise of civilization in the Fertile Crescent possible.
2. Learn about Sumer's first cities.
3. Examine the characteristics of Sumerian religion.

### Taking Notes

As you read, look for details about Mesopotamia and Sumer. Copy the outline below, and use it to record your findings.

- |                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| I. The geographic setting          |
| A. Mesopotamia                     |
| 1.                                 |
| 2.                                 |
| B. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers |
| II.                                |

### Target Reading Skill

**Reread** Rereading is a strategy that can help you to understand words and ideas in the text. If you do not understand a certain passage, reread it to look for connections among the words and sentences. When you reread, you may gain a better understanding of the more complicated ideas.

### Key Terms

- **scribe** (skryb) *n.* a professional writer
- **Fertile Crescent** (FUR tul KRES unt) *n.* a region in Southwest Asia; site of the first civilizations
- **city-state** (SIH tee steyt) *n.* a city that is also a separate, independent state
- **polytheism** (PAHL ih thee iz um) *n.* the belief in many gods
- **myth** (mith) *n.* a traditional story; in some cultures, a legend that explains people's beliefs



### The Work of Scribes

The language on this tablet—Sumerian—is the oldest known written language. **Analyze Information** *Why were scribes important in Sumer?*

The following words from the past come from a student at one of the world's first schools. He tells what happened to him when his homework was sloppy or when he spoke without permission.

“My headmaster read my tablet and said, ‘There is something missing,’ and hit me with a cane. . . . The fellow in charge of silence said, ‘Why did you talk without permission?’ and caned me.”

—A Sumerian student

The first known schools were set up in the land of Sumer (SOO mur) over 4,000 years ago. Sumerian schools taught boys—and possibly a few girls—the new invention of writing. Graduates of the schools became **scribes, or professional writers**. Scribes were important because they kept records for the kings and priests. Learning to be a scribe was hard work. Students normally began school at about the age of eight and finished about ten years later. The writings Sumerian scribes left behind help to tell the story of this early civilization.



## Mesopotamia

## MAP MASTER™ Skills Activity



**Place** The Tigris and the Euphrates rivers provided excellent conditions for human settlement.

**Identify** Name the physical features shown on the map.

**Draw Conclusions** Which of the physical features shown on the map would discourage human settlement? Explain why.

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## The Geographic Setting

Sumer was located in a region called Mesopotamia (mes uh puh TAY mee uh). Look at the map titled Mesopotamia. Like the place where you live, ancient Mesopotamia had special attractions that drew people to settle there. Most important, it had rich soil and life-giving rivers. These attractions drew people who became farmers and city builders. Sumer's central location within the ancient world drew many traders from other regions. Sumer became one of the most prosperous areas of the ancient world.

### The Location of Mesopotamia

Mesopotamia's name describes its location. The word *Mesopotamia* comes from Greek words that mean "between the rivers." The map above shows that Mesopotamia lies between two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

**The ruins of Uruk, an ancient Sumerian city on the Euphrates River, northwest of Ur**



Mesopotamia is part of **the Fertile Crescent, a region in Southwest Asia that was the site of the world's first civilizations.**

Turn to the map titled The Fertile Crescent on page 62. To see how this region got its name, place your finger at the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea (med uh tuh RAY nee un) on the map. Move eastward from the Mediterranean coast to Mesopotamia. Then move southeast to the Persian Gulf. Notice that the region you've traced is shaped like a crescent moon. The rivers of this crescent-shaped region helped to make it one of the best places in Southwest Asia for growing crops.

**Rivers of Life and Death** The Tigris and the Euphrates rivers were the source of life for the peoples of Mesopotamia. In the spring, melting snow picked up tons of topsoil as it rushed down from the mountains and flooded the land. The floods left this topsoil on the plain below. Farmers grew crops in this soil. The rivers also supplied fish, clay for building, and tall, strong reeds used to make boats.

The floodwaters sometimes brought sorrows as well as gifts. The floods did not always happen at the same time each year. Racing down without warning, they swept away people, animals, crops, and houses. Then, the survivors would rebuild and pray that the next flood would not be so destructive.

**✓ Reading Check** **How did flooding rivers affect people who settled in Mesopotamia?**

### Peacetime in Sumer

Around 2500 B.C., artists from the Sumerian city-state of Ur created this mosaic recording of peacetime activities. Shown are two out of the three rows of figures.

- 1 The king sits facing members of the royal family at a banquet.
- 2 Servants stand ready to wait upon the royal family.
- 3 A musician playing a harp and a singer provide entertainment.
- 4 Servants deliver animals, fish, and other items for the feast.

**Infer** *How do the activities shown provide clues about jobs and social classes in Ur?*



## The First Cities

As farming succeeded in Mesopotamia, communities began to build up surpluses of food. In time, food surpluses encouraged the growth of cities. By 3500 B.C., some of the earliest known cities arose in the southern region of Sumer, along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

**Independent Cities Form** Although cities in Sumer shared a common culture and language, they did not unite under a single ruler. Instead, they remained politically independent city-states. A **city-state is a city that is also a separate, independent state**. Each Sumerian city acted as an independent state, with its own special god or goddess, its own government, its own army, and, eventually, its own king.

**A Brief Tour of a Sumerian City** Public squares bustled with activity. In the marketplaces, merchants displayed goods in outdoor stalls. Musicians, acrobats, beggars, and water sellers filled the streets. For a fee, scribes wrote letters for those who could not read or write. Sumerian houses faced away from the crowded streets, onto inner courtyards where families ate and children played. On hot nights, people slept outdoors on their homes' flat roofs. Oil lamps supplied light for Sumerian homes.

**✓ Reading Check** How were the cities of Sumer governed?



### Rereading

Reread the paragraph at left. In what ways did Sumerian cities act as states?



## Sumerian Religion

A stranger coming to a Sumerian city could easily notice a giant brick building at the heart of the city. It was the ziggurat (ZIG oot rat), the site of the temple to the main god or goddess of the city.



Sumerians placed prayer figures on altars. The eyes of the worshiping figures were made wide, as though they were fixed on the gods.

**Sumerian Temples** Religious, social, and economic activities all took place at the temple sites. Ziggurats were pyramids made of terraces, one on top of another, linked by ramps and stairs. Some were more than seven stories high. At the top of each ziggurat was a shrine. The Sumerians believed that gods descended to Earth using the ziggurat as a stairway.

**Ancient Religious Beliefs** The people of Sumer worshiped many gods and goddesses. This practice is known as **polytheism, a belief in many gods**. To understand this word, break it up into its parts. *Poly-*, a Greek prefix, means “many.” *Theism* means “belief in a god or gods.”

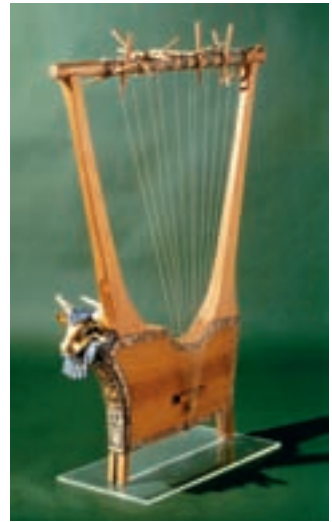
Sumerian **myths, or stories about gods that explain people’s beliefs**, warned that the gods would punish people who angered them. The myths also promised rewards to people who served the gods well.

### Stairway to the Heavens

This partially restored brick ziggurat was part of the ancient city of Ur. **Analyze Images** Why do you think the Sumerians believed the gods could use the ziggurat to descend to Earth?



**Honoring the Gods** The Sumerians honored their gods in religious ceremonies. Temple priests washed the statues of gods before and after each meal was offered. Music sounded and incense burned as huge plates of food were laid before them. In most ancient religions, the food was often eaten after it was presented to the gods. Perhaps the worshipers thought that by eating the offering, they would be taking in the qualities they admired in the gods. The religious beliefs of the Sumerians give us an idea of what was important to them. Poetry was also used to express what was important to them:



**A reconstructed musical instrument called a lyre (lyr), about 2500 B.C., from Ur**

**The Fall of Sumer** Unfortunately for Sumer, its wealth became its downfall. Sumerian city-states fought each other over land and the use of river water. Rulers from various city-states won and lost control of all of Sumer. Around 2300 B.C., Sumer was conquered by the armies of neighboring Akkad (AK ad). Its ruler, King Sargon, united the Sumerian city-states and improved Sumer's government and its military. Sumer remained united for about 100 years until it dissolved once more into independent city-states. Sumer was no longer a major power after 2000 B.C. It fell to a northern rival, Babylonia, in the 1700s B.C.

✓ **Reading Check** What weakened the cities of Sumer?



## Section 1 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

What word or idea were you able to clarify by rereading certain passages?

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** Describe the geography of Mesopotamia.

(b) **Find the Main Ideas** How did Mesopotamia's geography help civilizations to develop in the area?

2. (a) **Compare** In what ways were Sumerian cities alike?

(b) **Contrast** In what ways were the cities of Sumer different?

3. (a) **Explain** How did Sumerians practice religion?

(b) **Infer** What do the religious practices of the Sumerians tell us about their values?

### Writing Activity

Write a journal entry from the viewpoint of a student scribe in Sumer. Describe what you see on your walk to school.

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For: An activity on Sumer  
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## Prepare to Read

## Objectives

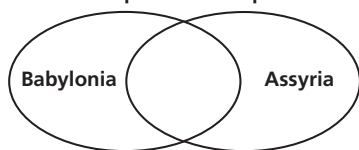
In this section you will

1. Learn about the three most important empires of the Fertile Crescent.
2. Find out what characterized the Babylonian and Assyrian empires.
3. Investigate the achievements of the Persian Empire.

## Taking Notes

As you read, note the similarities and the differences between Babylonia and Assyria. Copy the Venn diagram below, and record your findings in it.

Mesopotamian Empires



**Target Reading Skill**

**Paraphrase** When you paraphrase, you restate what you have read in your own words. You could paraphrase the first paragraph of this section this way: “King Sargon II of Assyria learned that two kingdoms were joining together to resist him. In 714 B.C., he attacked the weaker forces of Urartu and Zikirtu.”

As you read, paraphrase or “say back” the information following each red or blue heading.

## Key Terms

- **empire** (EM pyr) *n.* many territories and peoples controlled by one government
- **Babylon** (BAB uh lahn) *n.* the capital of Babylonia; a city of great wealth and luxury
- **caravan** (KA ruh van) *n.* a group of travelers journeying together
- **bazaar** (buh ZAHHR) *n.* a market selling different kinds of goods
- **Zoroastrianism** (zoh roh AS tree un iz um) *n.* a religion that developed in ancient Persia

**King Sargon II of Assyria (center) and two officials**



**K**ing Sargon II of Assyria (uh SEER ee uh) heard the news: Assyria had attacked the nearby kingdoms of Urartu and Zikirtu as planned. But the two kingdoms had then joined forces against him. How dare they resist the most powerful monarch in the world? In the summer of 714 B.C., King Sargon II set out to confront his enemies.

The two kingdoms were no match for the powerful Assyrian ruler. His armies quickly overcame the forces of Urartu and killed all who resisted. The Assyrians howled with laughter when they saw the king of Urartu fleeing on an old horse. Sargon II let him go. He knew that the defeated king would serve as a warning to others who might later be tempted to challenge the mighty Assyrians. Sargon II was one of many kings who ruled the Fertile Crescent after the fall of Sumer.

# The Babylonian Empire

A ruler who conquered all of Mesopotamia created an **empire**, or an area of many territories and peoples that is controlled by one government. Rulers of empires gained great wealth from trade and agriculture. Hammurabi (hah muh RAH bee) created the Babylonian Empire in 1787 B.C. by conquering cities in Sumer. Then he conquered lands far to the north. The beautiful city of **Babylon was the capital of the Babylonian empire**. Find the boundaries of the empire on the map titled Fertile Crescent Empires, on page 39.

The Babylonians built roads throughout the empire. The roads made travel easier, which encouraged trade. Babylon's location made it a crossroads of trade. **Caravans, or groups of travelers**, stopped in Babylon on their way between Sumer to the south and Assyria to the north. In the city's **bazaars, or markets**, shoppers could buy cotton cloth from India and spices from Egypt.

Trade made Babylon rich. But all the wealth that Babylon had gathered could not save it from conquest. The empire that Hammurabi had conquered shrank and was finally destroyed by invaders in the early 1500s B.C.

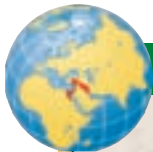
**✓ Reading Check** Who was Hammurabi, and what did he accomplish?

Links to

**Math**

## Babylonian Mathematics

The Babylonians developed a useful system of mathematics for solving everyday problems. For example, they learned to calculate areas of geometric shapes. Such calculations were important for making building plans. Their number system was based on numbers from 1 to 60. We still divide minutes and hours into 60 parts.



## Fertile Crescent Empires

## MAP MASTER<sup>™</sup> Skills Activity

**Regions** The ancient empires of the Fertile Crescent spanned several regions.

**Identify** Which region was part of all of the empires shown on the map?

**Infer** What might explain the change in the size of empires over time?

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**Assyrian warriors carry off goods from a defeated enemy.**



**Target Skill**

### Paraphrase

Paraphrase the paragraph that follows the heading Assyria's Contributions.

## The Empire of the Assyrians

The kingdom of Assyria lay in open land, making it easy for other peoples to invade. Since they were constantly defending themselves, the Assyrians became skilled warriors. About 1365 B.C., they decided the best method of defense was to attack. By 650 B.C., Assyria had conquered a large empire. It stretched across the Fertile Crescent, from the Nile River to the Persian Gulf.

**Assyria's Contributions** The Assyrians were clever when it came to waging war. They invented the battering ram, a powerful weapon having a wooden beam mounted on wheels. Battering rams pounded city walls to rubble. Warriors used slings to hurl stones at the enemy. Expert archers were protected with helmets and armor. But most feared were the armed charioteers who slashed their way through the enemy troops.

As the empire grew, Assyria's capital of Nineveh (NIN uh vuh) became a city of great learning. It had a remarkable library that held thousands of clay tablets with writings from Sumer and Babylon. Because the Assyrians kept these records, we now know a great deal about life in early Mesopotamia.

**Assyria Overthrown** The Assyrians had few friends in the lands that they ruled. Conquered peoples attempted a number of revolts against Assyrian rule. Two groups, the Medes (meedz) and Chaldeans (kal DEE unz), joined together to defeat the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C.

**✓ Reading Check** What were the strengths of the Assyrian Empire?



## Babylonia Rises Again

Under the Chaldeans, Babylon rose again to even greater splendor. It became the center of the New Babylonian Empire. The New Babylonian Empire controlled the entire Fertile Crescent.

**Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon** King Nebuchadnezzar II (neb you kud NEZ ur) rebuilt the city of Babylon, which the Assyrians had destroyed. He put up massive walls around the city for protection. He also built a gigantic palace, decorated with colored tiles. Nebuchadnezzar's royal palace was built on several terraces that rose to the height of some 350 feet (110 meters). It had a dazzling landscape of trees and gardens. According to legends, he built the towering palace and gardens for his wife, who hated the dry plains of Mesopotamia.

**Advances in Learning** Under the rule of the Chaldeans, Babylon again became a center of learning and science. Building on earlier Babylonian knowledge of mathematics, Chaldean astronomers charted the paths of the stars and measured the length of a year. Their measurement was only a few minutes different from the length modern scientists have found. And Chaldean farmers raised “the flies that collect honey”—honey bees.

Like other Mesopotamian empires, the Chaldeans were open to attack by powerful neighbors. In 539 B.C., the New Babylonian Empire fell to the Persians, led by Cyrus the Great. But the city of Babylon was spared.

**✓ Reading Check** Who was Nebuchadnezzar II?

### Assyrian and Arab Troops in Battle

This stone panel shows Assyrian soldiers fighting Arabs mounted on camels.

- 1 Sturdy shields protected the Assyrian soldiers.
- 2 The Arab archers fought from swift camels.
- 3 The Assyrians fought from horseback and from chariots.
- 4 The Assyrian army was well armed and highly trained.

**Predict** Judging by what you have read about the Assyrian army, who is likely to have won the battle shown on this carving?





### An Ancient Persian Earring

This golden earring shows the Zoroastrian god, Ahura Mazda.

**Synthesize** What does this object show about Persian culture?

## The Persian Empire

Just to the east of the plains of Mesopotamia is a region of mountains, valleys, and deserts that is today the nation of Iran. This region was the homeland of the Persians who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. The Persians built the largest empire that the Fertile Crescent had ever known. By 490 B.C., their empire stretched from Greece in the west to India in the east.

**A Rich and Tolerant Culture** Persian culture included **Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion.** Zoroastrians originally worshipped one god, unlike their neighbors, who worshipped many. To rule their giant empire, the Persians developed a bureaucracy, or a complex structure of government offices. The Persians also built a road network across their vast empire, which enabled trade with neighboring civilizations.

The Persians tolerated peoples with different cultures. For example, they freed Jews who had been held captive in Babylon. They also supported Babylonian science and mathematics.

**Lasting Influence** Through conquest and trade, the Persians spread their religion, their system of bureaucracy, and Babylonian science to neighboring peoples, including the Greeks of Europe. These Persian cultural achievements survived to help shape our modern civilization.

**✓ Reading Check** How did the Persians promote trade?

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mup-0816 for an interactivity  
on Persia's capital, Persepolis.



## Section 2 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

Paraphrase the last paragraph in this section.

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Identify** Where was the city of Babylon located, and why was it important?

(b) **Analyze** How did the New Babylonian Empire build on the achievements of earlier empires?

2. (a) **Recall** How did the Assyrians build an empire?

(b) **Compare** How was the Assyrian empire similar to or different from other Fertile Crescent empires?

3. (a) **Identify** Where was the homeland of the Persians?

(b) **Synthesize** What were the main achievements of the Persians and what has been their lasting influence?

### Writing Activity

Epitaphs are messages carved into tombstones. They praise and honor the deceased. Write an epitaph in remembrance of Nebuchadnezzar II.

**Writing Tip** Keep your message short and to the point. To get started, summarize what you know about Nebuchadnezzar II.



# Section 3

# The Legacy of Mesopotamia

## Prepare to Read

### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about the importance of Hammurabi's Code.
2. Find out how the art of writing developed in Mesopotamia.

### Taking Notes

As you read, look for details summarizing the achievements of Mesopotamian civilizations. Copy the table below, and record your findings in it.

The Legacy of Mesopotamia	
Hammurabi's Code	The Art of Writing

### Target Reading Skill

**Summarize** You can better understand a text if you pause to restate the key points briefly in your own words. A good summary includes important events and details, notes the order in which the events occurred, and makes connections between the events or details.

Use the table at the left to help you summarize what you have read.

### Key Terms

- **code** (kohd) *n.* an organized list of laws and rules
- **Hammurabi** (hah muh RAH bee) *n.* the king of Babylon from about 1792 to 1750 B.C.; creator of the Babylonian Empire
- **cuneiform** (kyoo NEE uh fawrm) *n.* groups of wedges and lines used to write several languages of the Fertile Crescent

**S**ometimes the customs and laws of other countries may seem strange to us. Imagine what it would be like to have to obey the laws set down by early civilizations.

“If a man has destroyed the eye of a man of the class of gentlemen, they shall destroy his eye. If he has broken a gentleman's bone, they shall break his bone. If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken a bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina [measure of weight] of silver. If he has destroyed the eye of a gentleman's slave, or broken a bone of a gentleman's slave, he shall pay half [the slave's] price. If a gentleman's slave strikes the cheek of a gentleman, they shall cut off [the slave's] ear.”

—from Hammurabi's Code



**King Hammurabi standing before Shamash, the sun god and the god of justice**

## Hammurabi's Code

What kind of justice system do you think we would have if our laws were not written down? What would happen if a judge were free to make any law he or she wanted, or if the judge could give any punishment? Would people think that the laws were fair? A written **code, or organized list of laws**, helps people know what is expected of them and what punishment they will receive if they disobey a law.

We live by the idea that all laws should be written down and applied fairly. The Babylonians held similar beliefs about law. **Hammurabi ruled Babylonia from about 1792 to 1750 B.C.** He set down rules for everyone in his empire to follow. These rules are known as Hammurabi's Code. The code told the people of Babylonia how to settle conflicts in all areas of life.

Hammurabi's Code, which was based partly on earlier Sumerian codes, contained 282 laws organized in different categories. These included trade, labor, property, and family. The code had laws for adopting children, practicing medicine, hiring wagons or boats, and controlling dangerous animals.

**An Eye for an Eye** Reread the first law from the quotation on page 43. Hammurabi's Code was based on the idea of "an eye for an eye." In other words, punishment should be similar to the crime committed. However, the code did not apply equally to all people. The harshness of the punishment depended on how important the victim and the lawbreaker were. The higher the class of the victim, the greater the penalty was. For example, an ox owner would pay half a mina of silver if the ox gored a noble. If the victim was a slave, however, the owner would pay only one third of a mina.

A person who accidentally broke a law was just as guilty as someone who meant to break the law. People who could not always control the outcome of their work, such as doctors, had to be very careful, as the following law shows:

“If a surgeon performed a major operation on a citizen with a bronze lancet [knife] and has caused the death of this citizen . . . his hand shall be cut off.”

—from Hammurabi's Code



### Summarize

Summarize the paragraph at the right. Give the main point and two details.

This clay lion once stood guard at a Babylonian temple.



**Laws for Everyone** You probably know many rules. There are rules for taking tests, playing ball, and living in your home. People have followed—or broken—rules for thousands of years. What, then, was the importance of Hammurabi’s Code?

The laws are important to us because they were written down. With written laws, everyone could know the rules—and the punishments. Hammurabi’s punishments may seem harsh to us, but they improved upon previous laws. Hammurabi’s laws were not the first attempt by a society to set up a code of laws. But his laws are the first organized, recorded set that we have found.

 **Reading Check** What was Hammurabi’s Code?

## The Art of Writing

Think how much more difficult life would be if no one knew how to read and write. But writing did not suddenly appear. It took a long time for the art of writing to be developed.

**Ancient Scribes** Writing first developed in Mesopotamia around 3100 B.C. Long before Hammurabi issued his code, the people of Sumer had developed a system of writing. Writing met the need Sumerians had to keep records. Record keepers were very important—and busy—people in Sumer. The Sumerians’ earliest written documents are records of farm animals. Since only a few people could write, it was one of the most valuable skills in the ancient world. Scribes held positions of great respect in Mesopotamia.

The scribes of Sumer recorded sales and trades, tax payments, gifts for the gods, and marriages and deaths. Some scribes had special tasks. Military scribes calculated the amount of food and supplies that an army would need. Government scribes figured out the number of diggers needed to build a canal. Written orders then went out to local officials who had to provide these supplies or workers. None of these records were written on paper, however. Paper had not yet been invented. Instead, the scribes of Mesopotamia kept their notes and records on clay.

## Hammurabi’s Code

- If any one steal the minor son of another, he shall be put to death.
- If any one is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death.
- If any one open his ditches to water his crop, but is careless, and the water flood the field of his neighbor, then he shall pay his neighbor corn for his loss.
- If a man adopt a child [as his] son, and rear him, this grown son cannot be demanded back again.
- If a son strike his father, his hands shall be hewn (cut) off.



### Chart Skills

The table above shows five of the nearly 300 laws that make up Hammurabi’s Code. At the left is a detail of the stone pillar on which the laws were carved. **Identify** Which of the laws in the table deals with the crime of kidnapping? **Generalize** What do the laws shown above tell us about the Babylonians’ ideas of justice?

### Links Across

### Time

**New Discoveries** In 2000, archaeologists uncovered a small stone with an unfamiliar type of ancient writing inscribed upon it. Scientists estimate that the stone, found in the present-day country of Turkmenistan, dates back to about 2300 B.C. The stone and other findings in the area indicate the existence of an ancient culture that had been entirely unknown.





Scribes sometimes enclosed a message (above) in an envelope (top) made from wet clay. As the envelope dried, it formed a seal around the tablet. A sharpened reed (below) is used to write cuneiform script on soft clay.

**A Record in Clay** The Tigris and the Euphrates rivers provided scribes with the clay they used to write on. Each spring, the rivers washed down clay from the mountains. Scribes shaped the soft, wet clay into smooth, flat surfaces called tablets. They marked their letters in the clay with sharp tools. When the clay dried, it was a permanent record.

The shape and size of a tablet depended on its purpose. Larger tablets were used for reference purposes. Like the heavy atlases and dictionaries in today's libraries, they stayed in one place. Smaller tablets, the size of letters or postcards, were used for personal messages. Even today, these personal tablets can be fun to read. They show that Mesopotamians used writing to express the ups and downs of everyday life:

“This is really a fine way of behaving! The gardeners keep breaking into the date storehouse and taking dates. You yourselves cover it up and do not report it to me! Bring these men to me—after they have paid for the dates.”













—from a Mesopotamian tablet

**How Writing Was Invented** Like most inventions, writing developed over time. Long before the Sumerians invented writing, they used shaped pieces of clay as tokens, or symbols. They used the clay tokens to keep records. Tokens could keep track of how many animals were bought and sold, or how much food had been grown. By around 3100 B.C., this form of record keeping had developed into writing.


At first, written words were symbols that represented specific objects. Grain, oxen, water, or stars—each important object had its own symbol. As people learned to record ideas as well as facts, the symbols changed. Eventually, scribes combined symbols to make groups of wedges and lines known as **cuneiform** (kyoo NEE uh fawrm). Cuneiform script could be used to represent different languages. This flexibility was highly useful in a land of many peoples.



## The Development of Cuneiform


Word	Outline Character, About 3000 B.C.	Sumerian, About 2000 B.C.	Assyrian, About 700 B.C.	Chaldean, About 500 B.C.
Sun				
God or heaven				
Mountain				

Refer to the table above titled The Development of Cuneiform. Notice how the symbols developed over time. Scholars believe that the Sumerians developed their system of writing independently. That means that they did not borrow ideas from the writing systems of other civilizations. Working independently meant that they had many decisions to make. They decided that the symbols should be set in rows, that each row should be read from left to right, and that a page should be read from top to bottom. What other languages are written this way?

 **Reading Check** When, where, and how did writing first develop?

## Chart Skills

The table at the left shows how cuneiform changed over time. **Identify** The simplest symbols came from which time period? **Generalize** How did the symbols for each word change over time?

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 on ancient writing.



## Section 3 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

Summarize the information in the last paragraph of this section.

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Recall** What was Hammurabi's Code, and what was its purpose in ancient Babylonia?

(b) **Analyze** What does the expression "an eye for an eye" mean in relation to the laws in Hammurabi's Code?

(c) **Apply Information** Hammurabi's Code was fair in some ways and unfair in other ways. Explain.

2. (a) **Describe** What were some uses of writing in Sumer?

(b) **Contrast** How do the early forms and methods of writing differ from the way we write today?

(c) **Draw Inferences** Why was the development of writing an important step in human history?

### Writing Activity

Reread the quote on page 46 in which the writer complains about the gardeners. Write a law that applies to the gardeners who stole the dates. What do you think should happen to the people who didn't tell about the theft?

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 writing  
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# Mediterranean Civilizations

## Prepare to Read

### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Understand how the sea power of the Phoenicians helped spread civilization throughout the Mediterranean area.
2. Learn about the major events in the history of the Israelites.

### Taking Notes

As you read, create an outline of the history of the Phoenicians and the Israelites. Copy the outline below, and record your findings in it.

- |   |
|---|
| <p>I. The Phoenicians</p> <p>A. Sea-trading power</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol> <p>B. Phoenician alphabet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol> <p>II. The Israelites</p> |
|---|

### Target Reading Skill

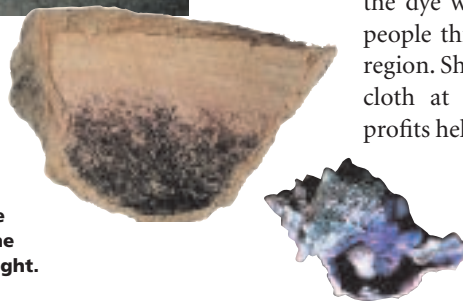
**Read Ahead** Reading ahead is a strategy that can help you to understand words and ideas in the text. If you do not understand a certain passage, read ahead, because a word or idea may be clarified later on. Use this strategy as you read this section.

### Key Terms

- **alphabet** (AL fuh bet) *n.* a set of symbols that represent the sounds of a language
- **monotheism** (MAHN oh thee iz um) *n.* the belief in one god
- **famine** (FAM in) *n.* a time when there is so little food that many people starve
- **exile** (EK syl) *v.* to force someone to live in another country



Above, ancient vats from a site in Tel Dor, Israel, once contained purple dye of the type used by the Phoenicians. The stained pottery piece in the middle probably came from a vessel that held the dye. The purple dye comes from the glands of the murex snail, shown at the right.



**W**hile the great empire of Hammurabi was rising and falling, the people of a city on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea were becoming rich by gathering snails.

The snails collected near the coastal city of Tyre (tyr) were not ordinary snails. These snails produced a rich purple dye. Cloth made purple with the dye was highly valued by wealthy people throughout the Mediterranean region. Ships from Tyre sold the purple cloth at extremely high prices. The profits helped make Tyre a wealthy city.

# Phoenician Sea Power

Tyre was the major city in a region called Phoenicia (fuh NISH uh). Locate Phoenicia and its colonies on the map below. The Phoenicians' outlook was westward, toward the Mediterranean Sea and the cities that were growing around it.

**Masters of Trade** The Phoenicians had settled in a land that had limited, but very important, resources. Besides the snails used to dye cloth, Phoenicia had a great amount of dense cedar forests. The Phoenicians sold their dyed cloth and the wood from their forests to neighboring peoples.

As trade grew, the Phoenicians looked to the sea to increase their profits. In time, they controlled trade throughout much of the Mediterranean. From about 1100 to 800 B.C., Phoenicia was a great sea power. Phoenician ships sailed all over the Mediterranean Sea and into the stormy Atlantic Ocean. They came back from these trips with stories of horrible monsters that lived in the ocean depths. These stories helped keep other peoples from trying to compete for trade in the Atlantic.



A silver coin from Sidon showing a Phoenician galley, a ship powered by oars



## Phoenician Colonies and Trade Routes

## MAP MASTER Skills Activity



### KEY

- Phoenicia
- Phoenician colonies
- Phoenician trade routes
- Phoenician trading centers

**Location** The Phoenicians usually sailed close to the coast.

**Identify** Name a city in Phoenicia and the trading center that is the farthest west of the city. Use your finger to trace a route between the two points.

**Conclude** How did the Phoenicians control the sea trade far from Phoenicia?

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map skills practice.

**Exotic Marketplaces** Trade brought valuable goods from lands around the Mediterranean Sea to the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon (SY dun). Bazaars swelled with foods brought from faraway places. These foods included figs, olives, honey, and spices. In the bazaars, merchants sold strange animals, such as giraffes and warthogs from Africa and bears from Europe.

The overflowing markets of Tyre awed visitors. Here is one description of Tyre’s bazaars:

“When your wares came from the seas, you satisfied many peoples. With your great wealth and merchandise, you enriched the kings of the earth.”

—the Bible, Ezekiel 27:33

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on ancient trade.

✓ **Reading Check** What resources did the Phoenicians first use to build their wealth?

## The Phoenician Alphabet

The Phoenicians relied on writing to help them conduct trade. They developed a writing system that used just 22 symbols. This system was the Phoenician **alphabet**, a set of symbols that represents the sounds of the language. It forms the basis of the alphabet used in many languages today, including English. In the Phoenician alphabet, however, each letter stood for one consonant sound.

The simple Phoenician alphabet was far easier to learn than cuneiform. Before the alphabet, only highly educated scribes were skilled in writing. Now many more people could write using the new alphabet. The alphabet simplified trade between people who spoke different languages. The Phoenician sea trade, in turn, helped the alphabet to spread.

✓ **Reading Check** How did the Phoenician alphabet differ from cuneiform script?

The Phoenician Alphabet			
A	Ⲁ	N	Ⲛ
B	Ⲃ	O	Ⲕ
C	Ⲅ	P	Ⲗ
D	Ⲇ	Q	Ⲙ
E	Ⲉ	R	Ⲑ
F	Ⲋ	S	Ⲓ
G	Ⲍ	T	Ⲕ
H	Ⲏ	U	Ⲗ
I	Ⲑ	V	Ⲙ
J	Ⲓ	W	Ⲑ
K	Ⲕ	X	Ⲓ
L	Ⲗ	Y	Ⲕ
M	Ⲙ	Z	Ⲗ



### Chart Skills

The chart at the left shows the Phoenician letters that correspond to our alphabet. The symbols for A, E, I, O, and U originally represented consonant sounds. The Greeks later used the symbols to represent vowel sounds. The Phoenician stone inscription above dates to about 391 B.C. **Identify** Which letters in the Phoenician alphabet seem similar to the letters in our alphabet? **Identify Effects** How did the Phoenician alphabet affect other civilizations?



## Canaan

## MAP MASTER™ Skills Activity



**Movement** The Israelites are said to have spent 40 years in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula trying to reach the land of Canaan. **Locate** In what direction did the Israelites travel to return to Canaan from the Sinai Peninsula? **Infer** What physical features of Canaan made it suitable for settlement?

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## The Rise of the Israelites

South of Phoenicia, a small band of people settled in the hills around the Jordan River valley. Called Hebrews at first, they later became known as Israelites. Although the Israelites never built a large empire, they had a great influence on our civilization.

Much of what is known about the early history of the Israelites comes from stories told in the Torah (TOH ruh), the Israelites' most sacred text. Historians compare biblical and other religious stories with archaeological evidence to piece together events from the past. In this way they have determined that Abraham, whose story follows, may have lived around 2000 B.C.

**Abraham the Leader** The Israelites traced their beginnings to Mesopotamia. For hundreds of years, they lived as shepherds and merchants who grazed their flocks outside Sumerian cities.

According to the Torah, a leader named Abraham taught his people to practice **monotheism, a belief in one god**. *Mono-* is the Greek prefix for "one." The Torah says that God told Abraham to leave Mesopotamia and settle elsewhere:

“Get you out of your country, and from your kindred [relatives], and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation.”

—Genesis 12:1–2



Target Skill

### Read Ahead

The Torah says that Abraham was told to leave Mesopotamia and settle elsewhere. Keep reading to see what that means.

**From Canaan to Egypt** The Torah goes on to say that Abraham led the Israelites from Mesopotamia to settle in the land of Canaan (KAY nun). Find this region on the map titled Canaan on the previous page. According to the Torah, a famine then spread across Canaan. A **famine is a time when there is so little food that many people starve.** The famine caused the Israelites to flee south to Egypt.

In Egypt, the Israelites lived well for a few hundred years. But then, an Egyptian king forced them into labor after he grew suspicious of their power.

**In the Desert** According to the Torah, an Israelite leader named Moses led his people out of Egypt. The Israelites' departure from Egypt is called the Exodus (EKS uh dus). For the next 40 years, the Israelites wandered through the desert of the Sinai (SY ny) Peninsula. Locate the Sinai on the map titled Canaan. The Torah says that while in the desert, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, a code of laws. Eventually, the Israelites returned to Canaan. There, over time, the Israelites moved from herding to farming and built their own cities.

### Old and New Jerusalem

People have lived in Jerusalem since 1800 B.C. Today, centuries-old buildings stand near modern hospitals, apartments, and hotels. **Analyze Images** Using clues from the photo, describe features that point to Jerusalem's ancient past.



**Settlement in Canaan** As they moved farther north, the Israelites were able to settle in many parts of Canaan. They united under their first king, Saul, who defended them against their enemies. The next king, David, established his capital in the city of Jerusalem.

**A Divided Kingdom** After David died, his son, Solomon, inherited the kingdom. After Solomon's death, the country split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel. The southern kingdom took the name Judah. The divided kingdom was ripe for invasion. Its neighbor, Assyria, conquered the Israelites and gained control of Judah.

**Sent Into Exile** In 722 B.C., the Israelites resisted Assyrian rule. In response, the Assyrians exiled thousands of people to distant parts of their empire. To **exile means to force people to live in another place or country**. The Assyrians controlled Judah until 612 B.C., when Assyria was conquered by the Chaldeans. Judah then fell under control of the Chaldean Babylonians. Later, in 587 B.C., the King of Judah rebelled against the Chaldeans. King Nebuchadnezzar responded by destroying the capital city of Jerusalem. He exiled the people of Judah to Babylonia.

**✓ Reading Check** Who were the Israelites?



King Solomon



## Section 4 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.



### Target Reading Skill

What word or idea were you able to clarify by reading ahead?

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) **Identify** Who were the Phoenicians?  
(b) **Recall** How did the Phoenicians gain their wealth and power?

- (a) **Explain** What are some features of the Phoenician alphabet?  
(b) **Identify Effects** Describe the importance of the Phoenician alphabet. How did it affect the Mediterranean world and later civilizations?
- (a) **Identify Sequence** Briefly trace the history of the Israelites from the leadership of Abraham to King Solomon.  
(b) **Identify Central Issues** What important events in the history of the Israelites were shaped by movement and by war?

### Writing Activity

Reread the description of Tyre. Using what you have read, write a poetic verse about Tyre's markets. Or work with a partner to write song lyrics on the same subject.

**Writing Tip** Poetic verses and song lyrics don't have to rhyme, but they usually have rhythm. To supply rhythm to your verse or lyrics, it sometimes helps to think of a familiar song as you write. Match words and phrases in your verse to the beats and phrases of the music.





## Section

# 5

# Judaism

## Prepare to Read

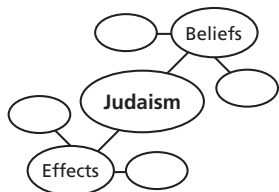
### Objectives

In this section you will

1. Learn about the basic beliefs of Judaism.
2. Find out about the effect that Judaism has had on other religions.

### Taking Notes

As you read, list details that characterize Judaism. Copy the concept web below, and use it to help you summarize this section.

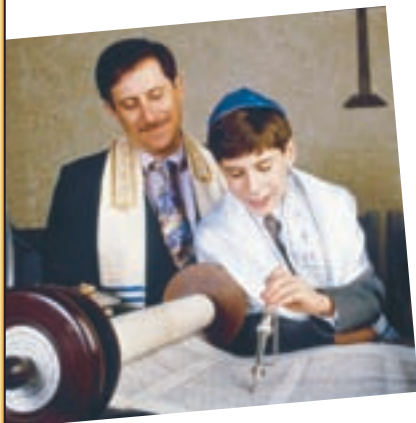


### Target Reading Skill

**Summarize** When you summarize, you review and state, in the correct order, the main points you have read. Summarizing what you read is a good technique to help you comprehend and study. As you read, pause to summarize the main ideas about Judaism. The diagram you are using to take notes may help you to summarize.

### Key Terms

- **covenant** (KUV uh nunt) *n.* a binding agreement
- **Moses** (MOH zuz) *n.* an Israelite leader whom the Torah credits with leading the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan
- **prophet** (PRAHF it) *n.* a religious teacher who is regarded as someone who speaks for God or for a god
- **diaspora** (dy AS pur uh) *n.* the scattering of people who have a common background or beliefs



Reading from the Torah

**T**he Torah, the most sacred text of Judaism, says God made a promise to the Israelite leader Abraham:

“I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will . . . be God to you and to your descendants . . .”

—Genesis 17: 6–7

The ancient Israelites viewed this promise as the beginning of a long relationship between themselves and God.

The early Israelites came to believe that God was taking part in their history. The Torah records events and laws important to the Israelites. It is made up of five books. They are called Genesis (JEN uh sis), Exodus, Leviticus (luh VIT ih kus), Numbers, and Deuteronomy (doo tur AHN uh mee). Later, Christians adopted these books as the first five books of the Old Testament. The promise that you just read is from the Book of Genesis. In Genesis, we learn of the very beginnings of Judaism, the world’s first religion that was monotheistic. *Monotheistic* means “having only one god.”



## The Beliefs of Judaism

To the Israelites, history and religion were closely connected. Each event showed God’s plan for the Israelite people. Over time, Israelite beliefs developed into the religion we know today as Judaism. You already know that Judaism was monotheistic from its beginning. It differed from the beliefs of nearby peoples in other ways as well.

**A Promise to the Israelites** Most ancient people thought of their gods as being connected to certain places or people. The Israelites, however, believed that God is present everywhere. They believed that God knows everything and has complete power.

According to the Torah, God promised Abraham that his people would become kings and build nations. God said to Abraham, “I will keep my promise to you and your descendants in future generations as an everlasting covenant.” Because of this **covenant, or binding agreement**, the Israelites considered themselves God’s “chosen people.” This covenant was later renewed by **Moses, an Israelite leader who lived sometime around 1200 B.C.** He told the Israelites that God would lead them to Canaan, “the promised land.” In return, the Israelites had to obey God faithfully.



### The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls (above) were discovered in 1947 in jars like the one shown at the left. The scrolls helped historians reconstruct the early history of the Israelites.

**Generalize** *What is the importance of archaeological finds like the Dead Sea Scrolls?*



Target Skill

### Summarize

Summarize the paragraph at the left. Be sure to include the key points and important details about God’s promise to the Israelites.

**Kosher** In Judaism, laws require that certain foods be kosher (kosh shur), meaning “fit for use.” These laws are based on passages from the Hebrew Bible. For seafood to be kosher, for example, it must have scales and fins. So, codfish is kosher, but clams are not. Other laws tell how animals meant for consumption should be slaughtered and how food must be prepared and eaten. Not all Jews follow these strict dietary laws today.

**Before sunset on Friday evenings, Jewish women light white Shabbat candles and say a blessing.**

**The Ten Commandments** At the heart of Judaism are the Ten Commandments. The Israelites believed that God delivered the Commandments to them through Moses. Some Commandments set out religious duties toward God. Others are rules for correct behavior. Here are some of the Commandments.

“**I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. . . . You shall have no other gods beside Me. . . . Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded. . . . You shall not murder. You shall not steal.**”

—the Ten Commandments

In addition to the Ten Commandments, the Torah set out many other laws. Some had to do with everyday matters, such as how food should be prepared. Others had to do with crimes. Like Hammurabi’s Code, many of the Israelites’ laws tried to match punishments to crimes. At the same time, religious teachers called on leaders to carry out the laws with justice and mercy.

**Judaism and Women** Some laws protected women. One of the Commandments, for example, requires that mothers be treated with respect. But, as in many other religions, women were considered to be of lower social status than men. A man who was head of a family owned his wife and children. A father could sell his daughters into marriage. Only a husband could seek a divorce.

Early in Israelite history a few women, such as the judge Deborah, won honor and respect as religious leaders. Later on, however, women were not allowed to take part in many religious leadership roles.





## Jewish Settlements, A.D. 100–300



**Movement** By A.D. 300, Jews—followers of Judaism—had settled in many areas far from Jerusalem. **Identify** What cities near the Mediterranean did Jews settle in? **Infer** What role do you think the Mediterranean Sea played in the movement of Jews at this time?

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map skills practice.

**Justice and Morality** The history of the Israelites tells of **prophets, or religious teachers who are regarded as speaking for God**. The prophets told the Israelites how God wanted them to live. They warned the people not to disobey God's law. Disobedience could bring disaster.

Prophets preached a code of ethics, or moral behavior. They urged the Israelites to live good and decent lives. They also called on the rich and powerful to protect the poor and weak. All people, the prophets said, were equal before God. In many ancient societies, a ruler was seen as a god. To the Israelites, however, their leaders were human. Kings had to obey God's law just as shepherds and merchants did.

**✓ Reading Check** What did the prophets tell the Israelites?

## The Effects of Judaism

After their exile from Judah in 587 B.C., the Jews, or people who follow Judaism, saw their homeland controlled by various foreign powers, including the Romans. The Romans drove the Jews out of their homeland in A.D. 135. As a result, the Jewish people scattered to different parts of the world.



After defeating the Jews in battle in A.D. 70, Roman soldiers carried off precious objects from the temple in Jerusalem.

**New Settlements** The Romans carried on the Jewish **diaspora** (**dy AS pur uh**), the scattering of a group of people, begun by the Assyrians and Chaldeans. See the map titled Jewish Settlements, A.D. 100–300, on page 59.

Wherever they settled, the Jews preserved their heritage. They did so by living together in close communities. They took care to obey their religious laws, worship at their temples, and follow their traditions. The celebration of Passover is one such tradition. It marks a time when Israelites believed their children were spared from destruction. Death “passed over” them, and they were led out of Egypt by Moses. Over time, such long-held traditions helped to unite Jews.

Children were spared from destruction. Death “passed over” them, and they were led out of Egypt by Moses. Over time, such long-held traditions helped to unite Jews.

**Effects on Later Religions** Judaism had an important influence on two later religions, Christianity and Islam. Both religions have their beginnings in Judaism. Both faiths originated from the same geographical area. Both were monotheistic. Jews, Christians, and followers of Islam all honor Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. They also share the same moral point of view that the Israelites first developed.

 **Reading Check** How did the Jews preserve their heritage?

## Section 5 Assessment

### Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

### Target Reading Skill

Write a summary of the last paragraph in this section.

### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Identify** What promise did the Israelites believe God made to Abraham?

(b) **Explain** What did God’s covenant with Abraham require of the Israelites?

(c) **Analyze Information** Why did the Israelites believe that they were God’s chosen people?

2. (a) **Recall** What religious laws did the Israelites follow?

(b) **Compare and Contrast** How does Judaism compare and contrast with the beliefs of other peoples in the ancient world?

(c) **Draw Inferences** What do the laws of Judaism say about the moral values of the Israelites?

### Writing Activity

Suppose you have a friend who wants to learn more about Judaism. Write him or her a letter explaining the basic beliefs and history of Judaism.

**Writing Tip** When writing a letter, remember to include the date, a salutation, or greeting, and a closing. It might help to have a specific friend in mind when you write your letter.



## Focus On Farming in Mesopotamia

**F**arming the land “between the rivers” required skill and determination. The life-giving rivers could be generous one year and stingy the next. Frosts, droughts, floods, weeds, or insects could bring starvation. For survival, families worked together in farming communities. As cities rose above the Mesopotamian plain, governments created huge farms. From the river-fed land, farmers cultivated the crops—wheat, barley, cucumbers, and figs—that nourished kingdoms for many years to come.

**Working the Fields** Farmers in Mesopotamia were allowed a certain amount of water each year to prepare their soil for planting and to water their crops. Local officials often decided when to open the floodgates in canals, allowing water into the fields.

Farmers would let their animals graze in the wet soil, to trample and eat the weeds. The earliest farmers then broke up the soil using hand tools. This work became easier with the invention of the ox-drawn plow. After plowing, the seeds could be planted.

At first, farmers spread seeds by hand. In the 2000s B.C., they attached a funnel to the plow, as shown in the illustration, to spread the seeds easily and more evenly. After the grain was harvested, it was threshed, or pounded to separate the grain from the straw.





### Farming Tools

Early farmers in Mesopotamia first used simple tools—sticks for plowing and stone-bladed sickles, like the one shown here, for harvesting grain. In time, more efficient tools were invented.



## Assessment

**Analyze Information** Describe how farmers in Mesopotamia prepared the soil and planted their crops.

**Draw Conclusions** How did Mesopotamians improve their farming methods over time?

### Pottery

The pottery made by Mesopotamians had many uses. The spouted vessel above, from about 3000 B.C., was found in Iraq. It may have been used to carry water. The cup, dated to 2200–1900 B.C., was found in Israel. It was probably used to measure grain.

# Identifying Main Ideas

“That movie was really confusing,” Brandon said to his friend Juan as they left the theater.

“The action was great, though,” said Juan. “Can you believe how much that explorer had to go through to find the treasure?”

Juan’s comment gave Brandon an idea. “I guess that was the whole point of the movie—to show all the adventures they had while they tried to find the lost treasure.”



**J**uan and Brandon were right. To understand anything you read or see, you need to identify the main idea.

## Learn the Skill

These steps will explain how to find the main idea in a written paragraph or in any kind of information that carries a message or a theme.

- 1 Look for an idea that all the sentences in the paragraph have in common.** In a well-written paragraph, most of the sentences provide details that support or explain a particular idea.
- 2 Identify the subject of the paragraph.** You may find the subject stated in several sentences. Or, you may find the subject in a topic sentence, one sentence that tells what the paragraph is about. The subject may also be stated in a title.
- 3 State the main idea in your own words.** Write one or two versions of the main idea or topic. Then reread the passage to make sure that what you wrote accurately identifies the main idea.



## Practice the Skill

Read the text in the box below, and then use the steps on page 54 to identify the main idea of the text.

- 1 What idea do the sentences in the paragraph have in common?
- 2 This paragraph does not have a title, so you will need to find the sentence or sentences that state the main idea. Is there a topic sentence?
- 3 First, try to come up with a title for the paragraph. Then turn the title into a complete sentence that identifies the main idea.

In 1901, an archaeologist discovered a stone pillar with an ancient set of laws—Hammurabi’s Code. The black stone is almost eight feet tall and more than seven feet around. At its top is a carving of Hammurabi receiving the code of laws from the Babylonian god of justice. About 3,500 lines of cuneiform characters are carved into the stone. These inscriptions are Hammurabi’s Code.

## Apply the Skill

Turn to page 44, and read the paragraph titled An Eye for an Eye. Follow the steps on page 54 to identify the main idea of the paragraph.

**The stele, or stone pillar, on which  
Hammurabi’s Code was written**

