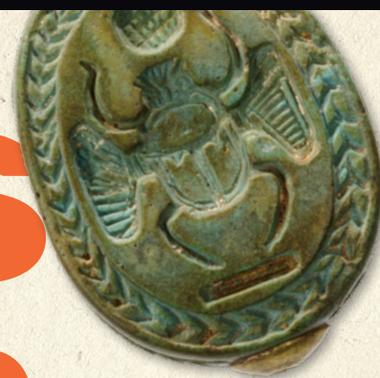


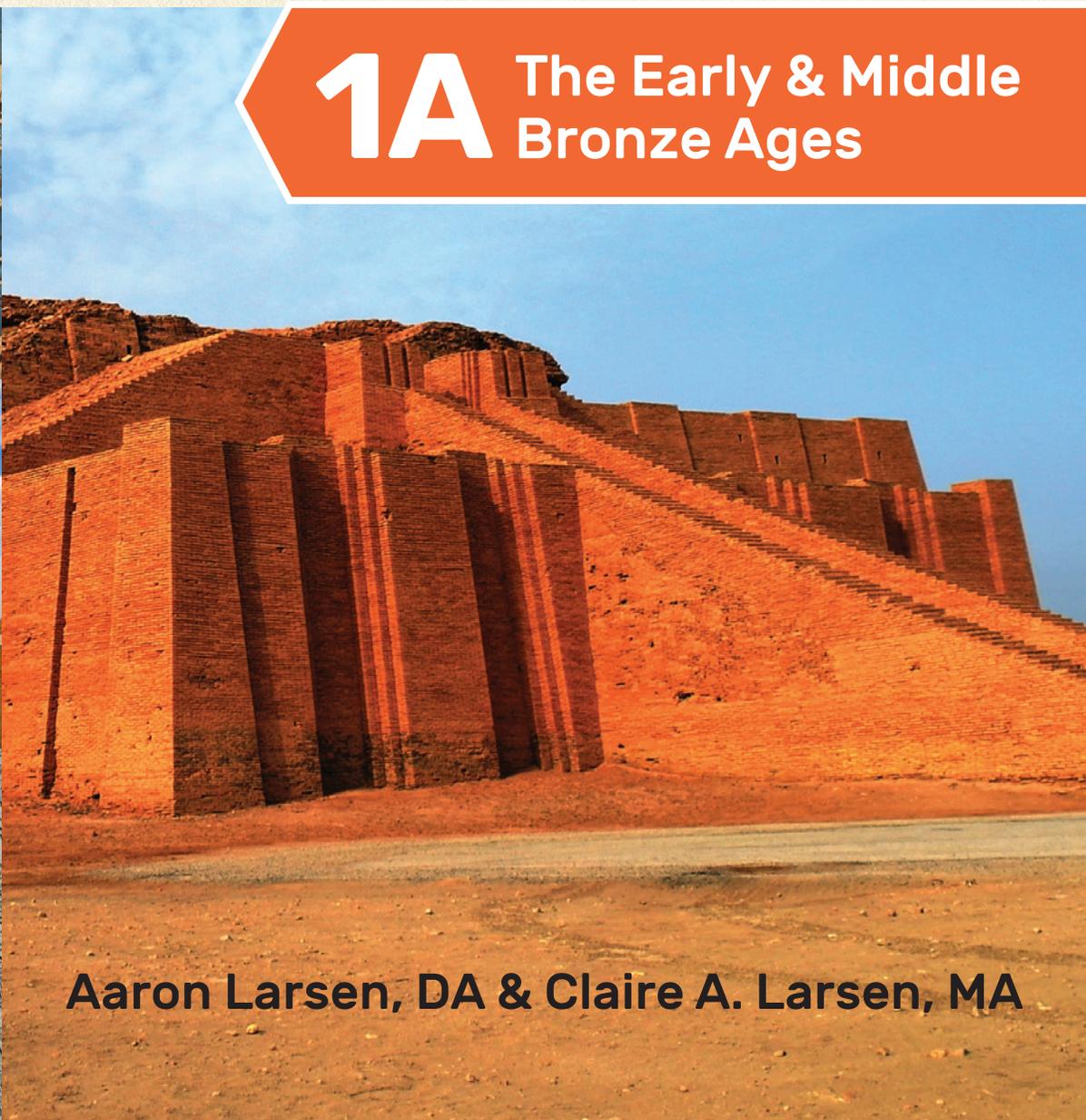
TEACHER'S EDITION

The Curious Historian



History & Culture
of the Ancient World

1A The Early & Middle
Bronze Ages



Aaron Larsen, DA & Claire A. Larsen, MA

Dedication

*In loving memory of our beloved father and husband, David A. Larsen,
a man who loved history and made the study of it an important part of his life.*

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*Classical Academic Press would like to thank the scholars, peer reviewers,
and teachers who contributed their time, expertise, and feedback in various ways
throughout the development of this text.*



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The Early & Middle Bronze Ages
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Introduction to Teachers

Welcome to *The Curious Historian*! We are glad you have decided to journey with us through the ages of history that we will be exploring in this series. We realize that not everyone enjoys studying history as much as we, the authors, do. Therefore, we have attempted to write a text that intrigues as much as teaches—one that will be enjoyable for both those students who say they dislike history as well as those students who are fascinated by stepping through the doors of the past and learning about the people who lived so many years ago.

Sometimes the information about these very ancient civilizations is uncertain, but we have attempted to put together the story of history in a clear, cohesive way that all can enjoy. To help students engage history with interest, throughout the narrative we have incorporated full-color art and pictures of artifacts, time lines, maps, various informative sidebars, and much more. This teacher's introduction will introduce our approach to teaching history and our intentions for this course of study. It will also supply an overview of the various elements found in the student edition and teacher's edition, and guidance as to how best to use them.

Our Approach to Understanding and Teaching History

We have created *The Curious Historian* series with the following classical approach and pedagogy in mind.

- We believe it is important to teach students to begin thinking like historians rather than just having them learn and memorize facts. Understanding that history is not only a record of events that happened in the past, but also the study of how human societies have changed over time, lays the foundation for seeing history as more than just a list of dates and names.
- Throughout the text, we often note that the lack of surviving artifacts and written records from the earliest periods in history means there are many facts and stories we cannot know—and ultimately may never know—for certain about the world's first civilizations. Our intent in frequently pointing out this scarcity of historical evidence is to help students understand that historians must engage in some degree of interpretation or puzzle solving as they try to understand and then recount what has happened in the past and what the evidence that *has* been discovered means. Often that available evidence is limited or—in the case of some written records—exaggerated, making historical interpretation difficult and subject to change. Usually, historical interpretation is not uniform, meaning that various historians may disagree about the meaning, significance, and even basic facts or chronology of various events. And, naturally, historical interpretation will change and evolve in light of new evidence that may be uncovered.

Throughout the book, either in the student text or in teacher's notes, we will occasionally note where there are important debates among historians, so that students begin to learn that historical interpretation can vary. We want to introduce students to the idea that historians do their interpretive work with various goals in mind, which determines what they focus on and what they may pass over. Young students of history ought not fret about the points of view or assumptions that every historian will bring to his or her work, but they should be introduced to the idea that we all bring our personal assumptions to any interpretive work. We recommend you use your discretion as to how frequently you wish to remind students that historians often make interpretations based on personal assumptions.

- History can be studied for multiple purposes, and those purposes will evolve as students mature. Elementary-aged students will not study history as critically and analytically as college students; nor will they have the background knowledge yet to do much comparative thinking and evaluation. In our view, following the classical tradition, the chief purpose for studying history is to cultivate virtue and wisdom in students. This means that they should learn to praise the true, good, and beautiful and blame that which is not. Various historical figures and events will often exhibit both praiseworthy and blameworthy elements. We should help students learn to be discerning and not to expect historical figures or events to be categorized easily as just “all good” or “all bad.” As mentioned in the series introduction (see TE note A on page ii), this discussion of virtues and vices will grow as we move into the later books in this series and cover periods from which we have more definitive surviving records.

- As noted in the series introduction, another important reason for young students to study history is to know their world and thus to better know themselves. The record of events and persons that have shaped our world is foundational to knowing who we have been, are now, and might possibly be in the future. In dozens of ways, students who have studied the past are well equipped to examine our current cultural moment and make wiser decisions about what is happening and what perhaps could or should happen. If our young students become curious about history—wanting to know the causes of events and movements and hungry to understand the motives of various people and the consequences of their actions—then they will be on their way to becoming thoughtful human beings, family members, workers, and citizens.

Book Introductions

The Curious Historian Level 1A (TCH1A) begins with a robust introduction, which is divided into three parts. This introduction sets the scene for the study of ancient civilizations. The vocabulary and concepts in these three introductions will be important in order to understand the rest of the text, so we highly recommend that you take time to cover the concepts.

Part I, “This Thing Called History,” defines what history is. We explain how history is about people, change, and common themes. We also introduce the concepts of cultures, societies, and archaeology: the foundations of our study of history and our ancestors. All events of history are set within a certain context of society and culture, and knowing these concepts is essential when beginning to put facts into chronological order.

Part II, “Begin at the Beginning,” looks at what artifacts can tell us about these people who lived long ago, and also explores how ancient peoples transitioned from wandering nomads to citizens living under rudimentary organized governments.

Part III, “How It All Began,” places the start of recorded history in the area of Mesopotamia, where our study of history officially begins. This final part of the introduction explains the building blocks of a true civilization: the importance of specialists and the creation of monuments, architecture, and a writing system. This section also introduces general information about Mesopotamia and the area once called the Fertile Crescent.

Unit Introductions

Each unit opens with an introduction that sets the scene for the rest of the unit. These unit introductions also include sidebars that introduce important aspects of archaeology, such as different types of artifacts and which materials survive the best over many thousands of years.

Chapter Elements

Time Lines and Notes regarding the Dates

Each chapter opens with a time line that records all of the pertinent dates discussed in the chapter, as well as additional “spotlight” events presented for context. It is important to keep in mind two key notes regarding the dates in *TCH1A*. First, dates for ancient history going as far back as 2,000 or 3,000 BC are usually estimated dates at best since we have few surviving historical records from those periods. Second, due to this lack of concrete evidence, almost every event this early in history will have multiple dates, all of which have been suggested and defended at some point or another by many other well-educated scholars. It is often hard to find a scholarly consensus. We present these early dates with the “ca.” (circa) indicator before them, indicating our inability to provide an accurate, exact date. Additionally, to help address this degree of uncertainty, in *TCH1A* we have chosen to present date ranges rounded to the nearest half-century for the major empires, dynasties, and kingdom periods we will be covering. Students are not required to memorize these dates, but a familiarity with the date spans will help them to keep the events in sequence.

Where we could, we have given as specific as possible date ranges for when key rulers were in control, but at times these will conflict slightly with the rounded-off dates we present for the overall time periods. For example, the start dates for the Old Babylonian Period are not definitive. Hammurabi took the throne ca. 1792, but we have chosen to give students a rounded-off start date of ca. 1800 for the Old Babylonian Period. We have pointed out such slight discrepancies in teacher’s notes throughout the text.

We should also note that historians typically follow one of three different chronologies for Mesopotamian history: “High,” “Middle,” or “Low” Chronology. These three timescales each base the known relative time line of the various Mesopotamian King Lists—surviving records of rulers prior to the sacking of Babylon by the Hittites—on different “absolute” (but still uncertain) dates. For example, each of these chronological approaches sets the date for the sacking of Babylon (and thus the end of the preceding king lists) at a different date: 1651 (High), 1595 (Middle), or 1531 (Low). (There is even an “Ultra-Low” Chronology that sets the date at 1499.) The relative chronology of the various kings and events in Mesopotamian history is reasonably well understood from the sacking of Babylon back to about the time of Sargon the Great. However, when each chronology sets the fall of Babylonia can push all previous Mesopotamian dates up or down by as much as 150 years. For our text, we have chosen to stay reasonably close to the Middle Chronology with our rounded-off dates, both because it is closer to the traditional dates we’re accustomed to using and because, as best we can tell, the scholarly consensus seems to be moving in this direction.¹

In addition to the chapter time lines (also found in appendix E), appendix F includes two timetables, one for ancient Mesopotamia and one for ancient Egypt, that present the periods, dates, and a few pieces of important information in a table format. These timetables are supplied as an alternate way to view the events of history, and early grammar-school students need not be expected to memorize them. Students at this level usually find it easier to understand the sequence of time and events when this information is presented in linear form, but timetables provide a similar educational value in addition to one key benefit: They can condense more information into a small space than is possible with a time line. As students get used to seeing the timetables, they will hopefully come to appreciate them as a good way of summarizing and memorizing information. As students progress into the higher levels of *The Curious Historian*, we will begin to include both a time line and a timetable within each chapter.

Vocabulary

The chapter vocabulary is divided into three sections: Important Words (key terms), Important Figures (key people), and Important Highlights (key periods, geographical concepts, and so forth). The vocabulary words are bolded and defined the first time they appear in each chapter lesson, and are included in the chapter exercises and quiz. We recommend beginning each chapter by spending a portion of class time reviewing the words and their definitions. Pronunciation for more challenging words, as well as expanded definitions for some terms, can be found in the alphabetical glossary.

Archibald Diggs: Archaeologist Extraordinaire!

Archaeology is a fascinating part of history and also a means to acquire a limited knowledge of very ancient times. In tribute to the important work of archaeologists, we have incorporated into each chapter of *TCH1A* the character of Archibald Diggs, an archaeologist, as a guide of sorts. Archibald appears in the form of sidebar notes and supplies interesting archaeological or historical tidbits that we hope will add flavor, intrigue, and at times even some humor to the lesson content. These sidebar notes are optional, but you may wish to include them as a way to help teach students a little bit about the interesting discoveries and contributions made by archaeologists.

Chapter Lesson

Weekly chapter lessons guide students chronologically through the most important periods of early Mesopotamian and Egyptian history: strong empires, times of many rulers, powerful dynasties, and so forth. While we have limited surviving records from these archaic periods, we have tried our best to explore the stories of how emperors and pharaohs rose to the throne, and how times of natural disaster, such as famine and drought, or invasions from outside kingdoms impacted these two lands.

(Example)

Human bones can sometimes tell us just as much as artifacts. Skeletons found during this time period have many severe injuries. This could mean that these people died in battle or in brutal attacks. —A.D.

1. For an excellent article summarizing the differences between these three chronologies, see Dutch historian Jona Lendering’s website, *Livius.org*, <http://capress.link/tch1ati01>.

You might read the chapter narrative aloud, with the students following along, or have your students take turns reading the text aloud to you. Either way, be sure to pause throughout to emphasize key points, check for comprehension, and engage in periodic discussions. (The Question Box sidebars, while optional, will be particularly helpful here to prompt further dialogue.)

Interspersed with the chapters that present this chronological history, we also devote chapters to delving into the fascinating culture of these two groups of people. We explore the challenges and innovations involved in constructing the massive ziggurats and pyramids and examine the development of the ancient writing systems of cuneiform and hieroglyphics. We consider why it is important to study the religion of ancient people, and what their beliefs can teach us about how they lived and what kind of ruler they served.

Throughout each chapter, we keep in mind some of the larger questions and great ideas that apply to all of us, both past and present: the importance of writing and communication, humanity's tendency toward creativity and beautiful art, the value of a professional military for a nation's defense, and our innate desires to be powerful and remembered long after we die.

Sidebars

Each chapter lesson is interspersed with a variety of sidebar elements. These sidebar pieces, indicated by icons, are optional but help to provide additional context or summarize information.

-  **History Bits:** These sidebars are typically numbered lists that summarize the accomplishments of an important ruler or highlight important discoveries or inventions. In other instances, they present a condensed version of a historical myth or origin story, such as the Osiris myth from Egyptian religion. Students do not need to memorize the information presented in the History Bits sidebars, but it can be useful to review the summarized lists of rulers' accomplishments in preparation for completing the chapter exercises and quiz, which sometimes will ask students to supply three or four facts about one of the key figures covered in the chapter.
-  **Religion in History:** Among many other things, the Bible is a historical record of the lives of ancient people such as the Israelites. The Religion in History sidebars point out places where ancient history intersects with historical events or figures mentioned in the Bible: for example, the migration of Abraham and his family from Mesopotamia around the time of the Ur III Empire. If you would like to further integrate biblical history into your study of *TCH1A*, you can purchase *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A* (see page TE-G of this introduction), which includes a Biblical Connections in *TCH1A* PDF with additional content. Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this optional piece.
-  **To the Source:** Many of our English words are derived from Latin or Greek. When a vocabulary word has interesting or unusual roots, we have supplied this information in a To the Source sidebar. These word origins may be of particular interest to students also using our Latin for Children or Greek for Children series. While in our Latin for Children and Greek for Children primers we typically keep the definitions simple, listing only one or two of the most common translations, in *TCH1A* we have listed multiple definitions or more nuanced meanings since the better translation may differ depending on the historical context or the English word being defined.
-  **Question Box:** If history is to be more than a dull list of dates and facts, we need to make it come alive for students by engaging their imaginations and ability to draw connections between these ancient civilizations and our modern world. Asking thoughtful questions, such as those found in the Question Box sidebars, is just one way of enlivening history and helping students to think more deeply about some of the patterns and influences that still exist in their own lives today. For example, how were these ancient governments similar to or different from ours today? What impact did inventions such as the wheel and writing systems have on the lives of these ancient people, and eventually on our own? We

have inserted these Question Box prompts at key points throughout the chapters to help you and your students explore as many thoughts and connections as possible. We have supplied sample answers, but you may wish to further expand on these discussions by using online or library resources. The sample answers are by no means the full answers or the only ways to answer the questions; they are simply prompts to help you and your students begin a discussion. Be as curious as you can!

Integration with Susan Wise Bauer's *The Story of the World: Volume 1: Ancient Times*

We think very highly of Susan Wise Bauer's *The Story of the World* series and her engaging, narrative approach to history. While we have chosen to present our study of history in a more standard, chronological progression of important events and figures, we also want to encourage students to enjoy longer narratives that can help them more deeply imagine what it would have been like to live in these long-ago eras. Therefore, throughout *TCH1A* we have noted where you may choose to supplement by reading sections or chapters from *The Story of the World: History for the Classical Child*, vol. 1, *Ancient Times*. We also encourage you to peruse Dr. Bauer's corresponding activity book if you think your students would enjoy additional hands-on activities and projects.

Maps

We have included a variety of maps in this text because being able to visually picture the geographical location of these ancient places is important for comprehension. These include wide area maps, such as the entire Fertile Crescent or the whole length of the Egyptian kingdom along the Nile River, as well as maps that zoom in on a portion of a geographical area in greater detail. Where possible, we have also supplied maps that show where these two ancient civilizations would fall in context with our modern geography and country borders.

In pertinent chapters, we have supplied Find It on the Map exercises for students to practice labeling key locations in ancient history. These exercises are optional. If you would like to incorporate geography into students' study of history, you can have students review the completed maps found in appendix C prior to completing the Find It on the Map exercises. We have also included an extra set of the blank maps in appendix D, and *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A* (available for purchase from ClassicalAcademicPress.com) includes a printable PDF of the blank maps, should you need additional copies.

Note: Our study of ancient Egypt will continue in *The Curious Historian Level 1B*. In this next book, we will supply an appendix, courtesy of The Geneva School in Winter Park, Florida, with tips and advice on how to hold an Egypt Day event at your school or co-op. Such an event is a great way to conclude your school year and demonstrate what your students have learned. A variety of the hands-on projects throughout *TCH1A* could be used as decorations or sample work to display during an Egypt Day event, should you wish to hold your own.

Chapter Exercises

The chapter exercises provide ways for students to review the material they have learned. We have incorporated many different kinds of review, both written and oral, to help students retain and expand upon the knowledge they have gained in these lessons.

- *Talk It Over:* These questions present a topic to explore and discuss either together as a class, in smaller groups, or at home with a parent. Usually the Talk It Over questions give students the opportunity to apply the chapter content on a larger scale.
- *Content Review Exercises:* Chapter exercises vary but typically include a mix of matching, multiple-choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and other formats to assess students on the specific vocabulary and important events and figures from each chapter.
- *Find It on the Map:* As mentioned earlier, the Find It on the Map exercises are an optional way to incorporate geography into students' study of history.
- *Be Creative:* These extended exercises are optional and ask students to complete a lengthier writing assignment, such as a short story or essay, mini biography, interview questions and a subsequent article about a key ruler's achievements, and so forth. In some cases, we have also supplied suggestions for ways to integrate these assignments with our Writing & Rhetoric series.

- *Think About It:* These questions present additional opportunities for students to think creatively, and at times do some further research, to more deeply apply their knowledge and draw connections between the chapter material and their own modern lives. We have supplied lines for students to write down their answers, but you could also choose to use the Think About It questions as additional in-class discussion prompts.
- *Make/Do It Yourself:* In pertinent chapters, we have supplied hands-on activities, such as basic craft projects or simple games, as a way for students to apply their knowledge firsthand. These activities are optional but can serve as another means to encourage your students to explore aspects of the past.
- *Bonus Activities:* For select chapters, we have supplied a section of one or two bonus optional activities that students can complete for extra practice. The full activities are typically only viewable in the student edition. Answers are available at ClassicalAcademicPress.com/Pages/The-Curious-Historian, under the “Support” drop-down (found beneath the product photos).

In addition to the discussion questions and hands-on exercises, you may also wish to prompt your students to narrate the events of the chapter lesson back to you. Having students retell the story of history in their own words can be helpful for ensuring comprehension and also gives them practice summarizing. You will see some of the exercises already ask students to practice this skill by putting events in the proper order, but you may wish to implement this practice on a larger scale.

Quizzes

If you would like to assess your students’ recall of the content, each chapter has a corresponding short quiz that tests them on the most important vocabulary and facts. These quizzes can be found in appendix B. You can also download blank versions of the quizzes as a printable PDF at ClassicalAcademicPress.com/Pages/The-Curious-Historian, under the “Support” drop-down (found beneath the product photos).

Unit Review Chapters and Daily Life Pieces

Each unit ends with a review chapter and a “Daily Life” piece. The unit review provides a short narrative that summarizes the main concepts from the previous unit and introduces the next unit (or next book). This summary is then followed by several pages of review questions and activities.

The “Daily Life” piece tells the story of a fictional child living in the geographical area students have just studied. The entertaining characters of Zimudar and Asenath explain, from a kid-friendly perspective, more about what life was like in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, respectively, from food to hobbies to family pastimes. These stories can provide another opening to draw comparisons to how students’ lives are similar yet also very different from the ways of life in these ancient times.

End-of-Book Review

TCHIA concludes with an end-of-book review containing a summary of the high-level concepts and a few final Talk It Over questions for discussion. The second half of the review includes short chapter-by-chapter summaries that ask students to fill in the blanks and supply key vocabulary terms or names of key figures. If you wish, you could have these chapter summaries serve as an end-of-book exam for students. If time permits, you may choose to spend an entire week working through this review chapter, as well as building in more extensive review, such as incorporating all of the chapter vocabulary terms. This is a thorough, though not exhaustive, way to review the material covered over the course of the semester, and also a good way to more easily review the essence of the book and the flow of the historical chronology without all of the peripheral material.

Glossaries

TCHIA includes a chapter-by-chapter glossary and an alphabetical glossary of all vocabulary words in this book. The chapter-by-chapter glossary reproduces the word banks exactly as they appear in each chapter, providing an easy way for students to review key terms prior to completing the exercises or quizzes. The alphabetical glossary includes pronunciation for more challenging words, as well as expanded definitions for some terms.

Appendices

TCH1A includes a variety of appendices for reference. These include the aforementioned chapter quizzes, the song lyrics, and the unit time lines and timetables. The appendices also include a reference archive that compiles charts of key empires, kingdom periods, dynasties, rulers, and more for easy review.

TCH Series Page

We offer a variety of optional, supplemental resources for *TCH1A*, some of which are free. Others are available for purchase as part of *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A*. The Curious Historian series page, ClassicalAcademicPress.com/Pages/The-Curious-Historian, makes it easy to find information and links for all of these resources at any time.

Free Resources

The following key resources are available for free on the TCH series page (click the “Support” drop-down):

- Scope and sequence for the entire series
-  **Go Deeper PDF:** We are passionate about history, and at times it can be difficult to limit ourselves to just the most important, large-scale information when there are so many interesting tangents to explore! For those teachers and students who find themselves inspired to dig deeper, we have created a free, supplemental Go Deeper PDF that includes additional information you may wish to share with your students or explore for your own interest. This includes, but is not limited to, fun tidbits (Did you know the world's first author known by name was the daughter of Sargon the Great? Or maybe you've been wondering what happened to the Great Sphinx's nose?), an in-depth comparison of ancient language systems, links to museum collections of artifacts, and more. By including this supplemental material as a PDF, we have the ability to update this document should any fascinating new archaeological discoveries tied to *TCH1A* come to light following publication. Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this optional PDF resource.
- Printable PDFs of the chapter quizzes (also found in appendix B)
- Printable PDFs of the cuneiform and hieroglyphics alphabet charts (also found in chapters 5 and 15)

Available for Purchase

The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A is available for purchase at [Classical Academic Press.com](http://ClassicalAcademicPress.com) and includes the following downloadable materials:

- **Songs:** It is a well-known fact that students rarely forget what they sing! *TCH1A* includes three catchy and entertaining songs that you and your students will enjoy singing in class and even as you go about the rest of your day. The unit songs summarize the key events and cultural pieces of each civilization. The third tune, “Top 12 Things to Remember from *TCH1A*,” is a great way for students to impress their friends and family with the most interesting tidbits about ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt! The lyrics are found in appendix A, and a PDF download of the song lyrics is included for easy reference if your students want to sing in the car, on vacation, or at a friend's house. A song icon in the text will prompt you to introduce each chapter's verse(s) to students at the beginning of each lesson.
-  **Biblical Connections in *TCH1A* PDF:** For teachers and parents who would like to integrate religious history/biblical studies with their study of ancient history, we have created a supplemental PDF that draws connections to biblical history and locations, scripture verses, and so forth. Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this optional PDF resource.
- **Reading Guide for *TCH1A* (PDF):** For those who would like to continue their exploration of ancient history beyond the pages of this text, we have supplied a recommended reading list, featuring titles for both students and teachers. This PDF includes clickable links for easy browsing and purchasing.
- Printable PDFs of the **blank maps** for extra geography practice (also found in appendix D)

- Printable, full-color **master unit time lines and timetables** (also found in appendices E and F)
- The “**Top 12 Things to Remember from TCHIA**,” beautifully designed as a convenient reference sheet
- Printable, beautifully designed PDFs of the **reference archive charts** (also found in appendix G)

Pedagogical Principles

The classical tradition has passed down a rich collection of successful methods for teaching students well. We encourage teachers of The Curious Historian series to become familiar with and to employ these methods while teaching history. Below is a list of key pedagogical principles that come to us from the classical tradition of education. You can read an annotated version of these principles of classical pedagogy under the Recommended Resources section at <https://classicalacademicpress.com/pages/what-is-classical-education>, and a video overview is available at <http://www.classicalu.com/course/principles-of-classical-pedagogy/>. A subscription to ClassicalU.com will grant you access not only to additional videos that cover the nine essential principles in more detail, but also to scores of other online training videos for classical educators.

1. ***Festina Lente: Make Haste Slowly***

Master each step rather than rushing through content.



2. ***Multum Non Multa: Do Fewer Things, but Do Them Well***

It's better to master a few things than to cursorily cover content that will be forgotten.

3. ***Repetitio Mater Memoriae: Repetition Is the Mother of Memory and Makes Learning Permanent***

Lively, regular review and repetition makes learning permanent.

4. ***Embodied Learning: Rhythms and Routines That Profoundly Teach***

The rhythms, practices, traditions, and routines we create in our classroom are just as important for learning as our front-of-the-class instruction is.

5. ***Songs, Chants, and Jingles: How Singing Delights Students and Makes Learning Permanent***

Mainly in the lower school, the most important content/skills we wish to emphasize should be taught or reinforced with a song, chant, or jingle.

6. ***Wonder and Curiosity: Modeling Wonder to Cultivate Lifelong Affections for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty***

We should regularly seek to impart a love for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty by modeling our own wonder or love of that which is lovely, and by asking good questions to inspire students' curiosity.

7. ***Educational Virtues: Cultivating Habits of Learning Necessary for a Student to Be a Student***

We should seek to cultivate virtues of love, humility, diligence, constancy, and temperance in the lives of students. In particular, when studying history we should ask, “What key figures and values should we emulate and praise?” and “What key figures and values should we avoid and blame?”

8. ***Restoring Scholé to School: Cultivating Restful Learning That Enables Deep Learning That Delights and Sustains Students***

We should provide adequate time for reflection, contemplation, and discussion of profound and important ideas, both inside and outside the classroom, both with and without students.

9. ***Docendo Discimus: By Teaching We Learn—Why Students Must Teach to Master Learning***

Older students should teach younger students to master material; you don't truly know something until you can teach it.

Chapter 1:

The Ancient Sumerians

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Sumer	The first important civilization in Mesopotamia
Canal	A deep, man-made ditch through which water moves from one place to another
Irrigation system	A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water
Prosperous	Having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life
Cuneiform	The writing system of the ancient Sumerians, created from wedge-shaped symbols
Step pyramid	A style of pyramid made with platforms stacked on top of each other, each one a little smaller than the platform below, so that the sides look like steps
Ziggurat	The style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods
Interregnum ¹	A period between kingdoms

IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Polytheist	A person who worships more than one god
Monotheist	A person who worships only one god
Patron god	A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city
Priest	A person who helps his people worship their god (or gods). A female priest is called a priestess.



Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! See appendix A. **A**

A Don't forget to introduce this chapter's song verse(s) to your students. The lyrics are found in Appendix A. We recommend having them sing the chapter song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.

Do the words "Mesopotamia" and "hippopotamus" look just a little bit alike? Both come from the Greek word *potamos*, meaning "river." The word "Mesopotamia" combines *potamos* and *meso*, the Greek word for "between," so this name literally means "land between the rivers." The word "hippopotamus" literally means "river horse"—an appropriate name because this large creature likes to swim in the river with just his nose and eyes popping out of the water!



-A.D.

1. See the alphabetical glossary for an expanded definition.

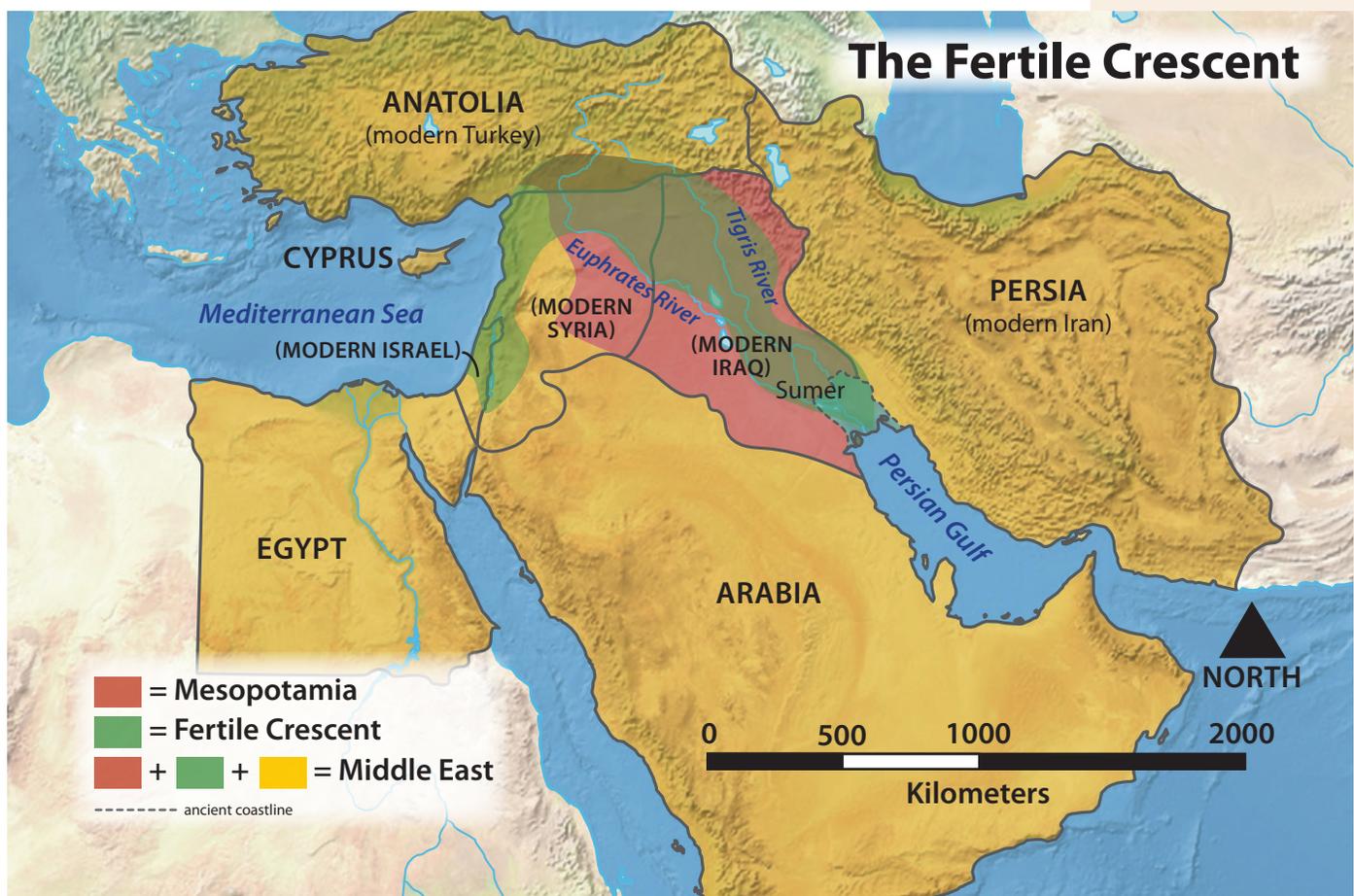
The Earliest Civilization

Many, many years ago, in a land between two rivers, the earliest civilization began. This land was called Mesopotamia, and the rivers were named the Tigris and the Euphrates. That is where our story of history begins.

The people of Mesopotamia were not the first people to live on the earth. But they *are* the first people from whom archaeologists have found artifacts with writing on them. With these artifacts we have been able to understand some things about who the Mesopotamians were and how they lived. By studying artifacts such as stone tools, broken clay pots, and clay tablets with funny-looking writing on them, we get a window, so to speak, into the ancient world in which these people lived.

We call this early group of people the Sumerians because they lived in **Sumer**, the first important civilization in Mesopotamia. Sumer was located near where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flow into the Persian Gulf. Today, this area is the southernmost part of modern Iraq.

Historians are not exactly sure when the Sumerian civilization began. Based on the dates of artifacts that archaeologists have found, we know that Sumerian people were probably living in the region as early as ca. 4000 BC. However, most historians believe there is no physical evidence of a Sumerian civilization until ca. 3200 BC at the earliest. Much of the Sumerians' ancient past has been forgotten through the ages, but a variety of items from their daily life ended up buried in the ground. Some of these artifacts have decayed. Other pieces have been lost or used up. But from the surviving items dug up by archaeologists, we can create a bit of a picture about this long-ago people.



? The Wheel

How important is the wheel? Like everything else, it had to be invented. Wheels have been used in many ways over the years. What are some things that would not exist today if the wheel had never been invented? **TE**>

BIf time allows, as you read the first few unit I chapters with students, you might also wish to discuss with them the common arts of agriculture, architecture, and trade. See Chris Hall, MAT, *Common Arts Education: Renewing the Classical Tradition of Training the Hands, Head, and Heart* (Camp Hill, PA: Classical Academic Press, 2021) for an introduction to the common arts as well as suggested classroom projects and activities.

COptional: Read “The First Nomads Become Farmers” section from chapter 1, “The Earliest People,” in *Story of the World*.

DIt may be helpful to remind students that planting and harvest seasons vary around the world depending on the region’s climate (temperature, length of seasons, periods of drought or little sunlight, etc.).

Transportation

So many things that we take for granted today did not exist in early Sumer. Think of all the modern inventions that make our jobs easier and able to be done in less time. For example, how do you think the Sumerians moved something from one place to another, or traveled between villages? When they needed to move crops or household items from place to place, they only had two options: carry the items themselves or use animals such as oxen to carry or pull the heavy load. And when the people traveled from village to village, they walked or rode on donkeys.

As the years passed, people came up with a better idea for a way to transport objects, and something amazing was invented that forever changed history. No one knows for sure who invented it, or exactly when it was invented. What was this history-changing invention? It was the wheel! Once the wheel was developed, many daily tasks and activities became easier. Two examples are transportation and pottery. Putting wheels on carts made it possible to move heavy things or a great many items with less effort, and much more quickly. The pottery wheel changed the way items such as pots, bowls, and other types of cookware were made. Using a pottery wheel resulted in finished pieces that were shaped more evenly and completed in much less time.



▲ Ljubljana Marshes Wheel, the oldest-known wooden wheel, ca. 3150 BC

Farming and Irrigation

The Sumerians were experts at hunting and fishing, but in early Sumer most people survived by farming. They grew barley, wheat, onions, dates, lettuce, turnips, garlic, and mustard (the plant, not the condiment). They also raised cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats.²**C**

Mesopotamia was not the best land in which to grow crops, because it was often dry. There was not enough rainfall during the year to keep the crops watered. The Sumerians lived close to the Tigris and Euphrates, hoping that the rivers would provide the water they needed, but the rivers did not always cooperate. During certain seasons, the rivers of the Fertile Crescent would rise high enough to overflow, flood the nearby fields, and water the crops. But there was a problem.

The best time for the rivers to overflow would have been in the fall and winter, when the crops were being planted and the need for water was the greatest. Instead, **D** the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers overflowed their banks in the late spring. This was the worst time for flooding because the crops were almost fully grown! When the floodwaters covered the fields, the crops were damaged by too much water. During the planting season, when the Sumerians needed water the most, the rivers were often at their lowest levels. What were the people to do?

2. Stephen Leston, *The Bible in World History: How History and Scripture Intersect*, Illustrated Bible Handbook Series (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2011), 25–27.

The Sumerians solved the problem in two ways. First, they created a system of short canals to carry the water closer to the fields. A **canal** is a deep, man-made ditch through which water moves from one place to another. A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water is called an **irrigation** system. In addition to the canals, the people also dug basins. When the river levels rose too high, the Sumerians captured water in the basins to keep the floods from damaging the crops. They stored the water in the basins to use later if needed. Their second solution was learning about the seasons of the rivers. The more they could understand what times of year the rivers would be high and what times they would be low, the better the people could control the power of the rivers and use the waters to their advantage.

In addition to the irrigation systems, the people dug wells to get water.³ Digging all of the canals, basins, and wells was hard, hot work, and had to be done by hand with simple tools. The Sumerians did not have sinks or pipes in their home, or wells with pumps. Every drop of water they needed for washing, cooking, and drinking had to be carried in heavy containers. Think how many buckets and trips it would take to collect all of the water a family needed to drink, cook, bathe, wash clothes, clean, water the animals, and water the garden!

Not all of Mesopotamia was hot, dry plains. The southern part of Mesopotamia was very different from the northern land. To the south of the city-states of Ur and Eridu lay an area of marshes. The marshes were not good land to live in, but they did provide something important for the people: tall reeds. The reeds that grew in the marshy areas were a valuable natural resource that the Mesopotamians used to make roofs and even to build elaborate huts. The people also wove the reeds into baskets for carrying and storing food, and into mats to use as seats and beds.⁴

A second natural resource found in the marshy areas was the date palm tree. Just like the reeds, the wide palm fronds were excellent for making roofs, and the bark of the tree could be turned into rope. But the most valued part of the date palm, was, of course, the juicy date fruit. The dates were picked in the fall. In addition to being easy to store, they were nutritious and delicious!

3. Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BC*, 2nd ed., Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 12–13.

4. Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC*, vol. 1, Routledge History of the Ancient World (New York: Routledge, 2005), 19, 21.



▲ Farmers dig an irrigation canal in Afghanistan



To the Source:

canal from the Latin *canālis*, meaning “pipe”



To the Source:

irrigation from the Latin *irrigare*, meaning “to water”



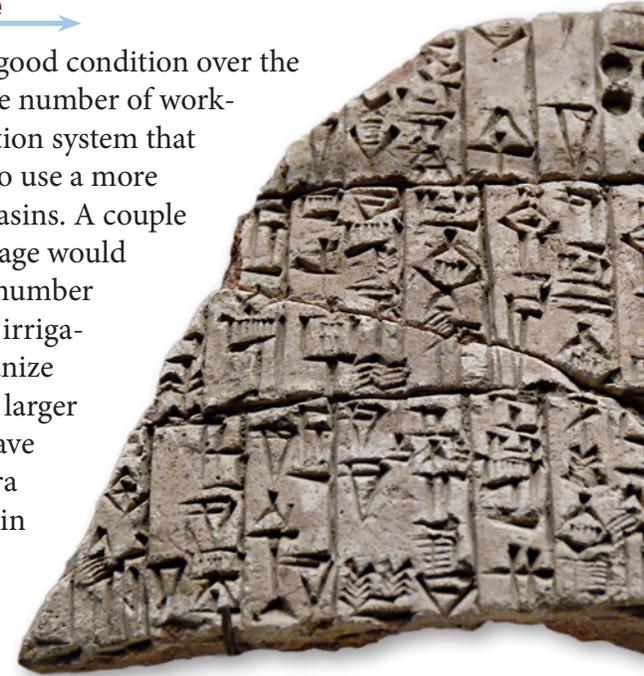
▲ Mesopotamian reed hut



◀ Date trees growing in Arizona

Cities, Trade, Writing, and More

Digging canals, and then keeping them in good condition over the years in the harsh desert weather, took a large number of workers. A small village could build a basic irrigation system that worked well. Over time, the people learned to use a more complicated network of canals and storage basins. A couple of families living together in a very small village would not have had the manpower to dig the large number of deep trenches needed for a more complex irrigation system. So, the Sumerians began to organize themselves into larger villages, and later into larger towns, so that they could work together to have enough water for every family. With this extra manpower, the towns and the farmers living in the surrounding countryside also produced more and more crops on the dry, flat land of Mesopotamia. They sold the crops and became prosperous. Over time, the business of farming and trading brought about the growth of towns into cities.



▲ Piece of a clay cone with cuneiform symbols, ca. 2350 BC

The cities of Sumer had names such as Ur, Uruk, Kish, Nippur, Eridu, Larsa, Shuruppak, Bad-tibira, and Girsu. How fast can you pronounce those names? During the years ca. 4000–3200 BC, these cities did not have walls around them, so historians think it was probably a time of peace among the cities.⁵ Later, after ca. 3200 BC, the cities began to fight against each other, each one trying to have power over the others. Now the people had to build walls around their cities to protect them from warring enemies.

Ancient records tell us that people in Sumer traded their goods throughout the Mesopotamian area, and this trade helped to make the cities **prosperous**. To be prosperous means having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life. What else made the Sumerians so successful? Another reason is that they were one of the first people to have a writing system. Archaeologists have found examples of the Sumerian language written on pieces of clay from as long ago as ca. 3200 BC. Having a writing system can make it much easier to trade and conduct business with other cities.⁶ A writing system is also important for a civilization because it gives people a way to record historical facts, keep track of spoken words and their meanings, and pass knowledge from one generation to another.

The Sumerians are remembered for creating and using a writing system called **cuneiform**.^{*} This writing system looks very different from our English alphabet because it used wedge-shaped symbols that could be put together in many different ways. You will learn more about cuneiform in chapter 5.

5. Walter R. Bodine, "Sumerians," in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, ed. Alfred J. Hoerth, Gerald L. Mattingly, and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994), 22.

6. Leston, *Bible in World History*, 27–28.



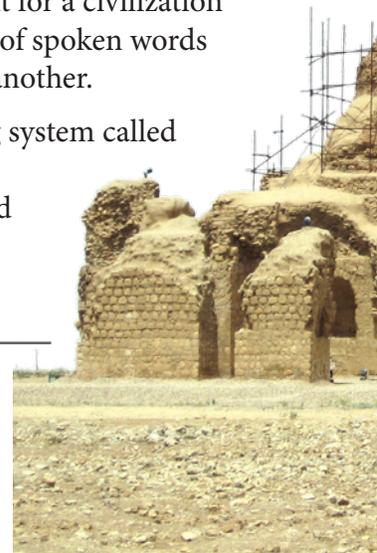
To the Source:
cuneiform from the Latin *cuneus*, meaning "wedge, cone"



The Importance of a Writing System

Having a writing system means people can do the following:

1. More easily trade and conduct business
2. Record historical facts
3. Keep track of spoken words and their meanings
4. Pass knowledge from one person to another many generations apart
5. Write down stories and legends
6. Write letters to people
7. Write inscriptions on monuments and buildings
8. Write down instructions for how to do a task
9. Write down poetry and songs
10. Keep business and family records





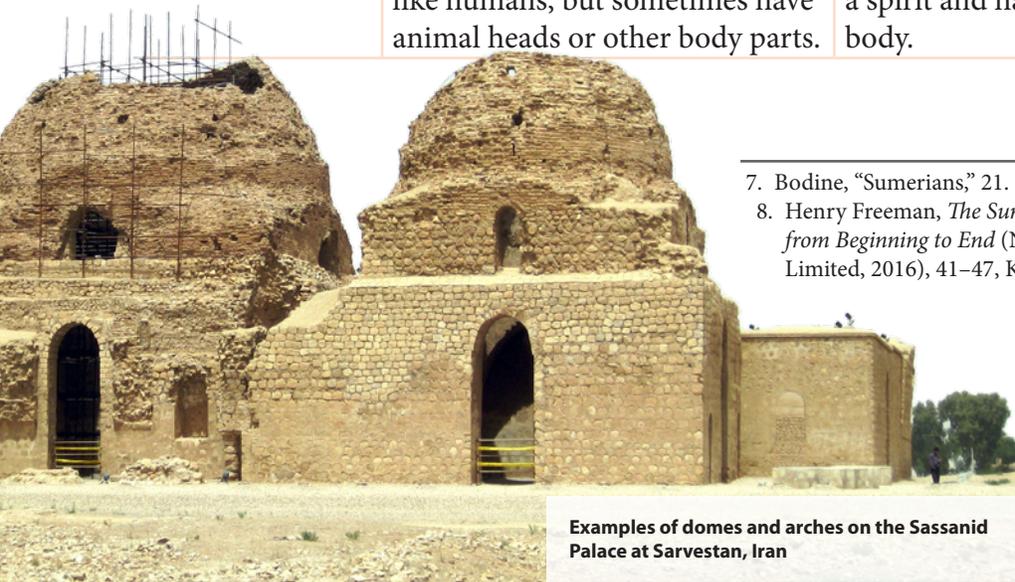
The Sumerians were advanced in several other ways as well. Their buildings had more complicated pieces of architecture, such as early forms of domes and arches. Domes and arches are difficult to build but make a building more stable because they provide strong support for a heavy roof and help the building to last longer. Domes and arches also bring beauty to structures, and are often used in temples and government buildings. The Sumerians also created a numbering system based on the number sixty. Do we use any numbering systems based on the number sixty today? If you guessed telling time and measuring circles and angles, you are right!⁷

Religion and Ziggurats

Religion was an important part of everyone’s lives during this time, and the people in Sumer worshipped many gods. That means the Sumerians were polytheists, because a **polytheist**⁷ is a person who worships more than one god. The following chart shows some of the differences between polytheists and **monotheists**, or people who worship only one god.

POLYTHEISM VERSUS MONOTHEISM

	POLYTHEISM	MONOTHEISM
Number	People worship many gods and goddesses.	People worship only one god.
Power	Each god has his or her own realm of power.	One god has supreme power and rules over the entire universe.
Culture/Religion	Ancient pagan religions, the Greeks, the Romans, Hinduism, some modern African religions	Judaism, Christianity, Islam
Choice	A person can choose which god to worship and can also worship many gods at the same time.	A person must worship only one god. Worship of anything else is forbidden.
Appearance	Gods or goddesses mostly look like humans, but sometimes have animal heads or other body parts.	The one god is considered a spirit and has no visible body.



Examples of domes and arches on the Sassanid Palace at Sarvestan, Iran

Sumerian Inventions

1. The wheel
2. First writing system (cuneiform)
3. Advanced architecture, such as early forms of domes and arches
4. Numbering system based on the number sixty
5. Earliest-known written laws
6. First libraries and first schools
7. First common system of weights and measures
8. 12-month calendar, 24-hour day, 60-minute hour, and 360-degree circle
9. First flushing toilet
10. First paved streets
11. An early form of plow called the seeder plow⁸

 **To the Source:**
polytheist from the Greek *poly*, meaning “many,” and *theos*, meaning “god”

7. Bodine, “Sumerians,” 21.
 8. Henry Freeman, *The Sumerians: A History from Beginning to End* (N.p.: Hourly History Limited, 2016), 41–47, Kindle.

 If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about references in the Old Testament to Sumer and other ancient Mesopotamian city-states.

Each Sumerian city had its own particular god, called a **patron god**. This god was chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city. The most important building in each city was the temple of the patron god.

In many ancient Mesopotamian societies, both men and women served as religious leaders. A **priest** is a person who helps his people worship their god (or gods). A female priest is called a priestess. In larger cities, the patron god was served by a chief priest or chief priestess. In ancient Sumer, the king's daughter was often a chief priestess.

The jobs of the Sumerian priests and priestesses were very different from the work that religious leaders perform today. Instead of serving the people in their communities, the priests and priestesses first served their king, because the people believed the king had a special relationship with the gods. The priests and priestesses also managed the donations and taxes that the people gave to the temple. In some cities, the people gave so many donations that the priests and priestesses of the temple became wealthy. In addition to handling the temple's money, the priests and priestesses were responsible for the fields, herds of animals, and workshops that all belonged to the temple.

Sometimes hundreds of men and women worked in the temples. They cared for the gods by dressing the statues of the gods and offering them food, drink, jewels, and sacrifices. They also prepared feasts for the people to enjoy. On feast days, the temple would be opened to everyone in the city. The people would spend the day at



A modern photo of the Ziggurat of Ur

the temple, celebrating the gods and enjoying a day off from their hard work. Sumerian temples were lively places where the people could hear the sounds of musicians singing to the gods, smell the food offerings being prepared, and see the sculptors at work making beautiful statues.

Because the Sumerian people worshipped many gods, most of the temples were small and built on the ground. However, the Sumerians also built triangular-shaped step pyramids made from sunbaked mud or clay bricks. These step pyramids were called ziggurats. A **step pyramid** is a style of pyramid made with platforms stacked on top of each other, each one a little smaller than the platform below, so that the sides look like steps. A **ziggurat**⁹ was the style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods.

At the top of the ziggurat was a temple built by the people. They hoped that the god would find the temple to be a pleasant place and come down from the heavens to dwell there. That is why the word “ziggurat” means both “holy mountain” and “to raise high.” The people felt safer when they thought the god was dwelling in the temple atop the ziggurat. They wanted the god to be happy so that they would have good weather to grow their crops and would be protected from their enemies.⁹

Although some ziggurats were built very high, as you will learn in chapter 3, most early ziggurats were simple. A typical ziggurat was just a raised mound of dirt with a temple on top for the city’s patron god. The larger ziggurats were so high that the people had to build long staircases along the side of each platform, or step, in order to climb up from one level to the next.



To the Source:

ziggurat from the Akkadian *ziqurratu*, from *zaqāru*, literally meaning “to build high”



The Bible: The Tower of Babel

Do you remember the Tower of Babel? This tower was probably a ziggurat that was being built to honor one of the Mesopotamian gods.



E From p. 28: Please note the following regarding the unit I time line on the following pages:

1. We have also supplied this information in appendix F as a timetable in order to provide students with a way to see the overall picture of ancient history in context.
2. The unit I time line (and the corresponding timetable found in appendix F) doesn’t list all the kings and kingdoms of Mesopotamia during these historical periods. There were far too many to list them all here. The Sumerian kingdoms we are studying in *TCH1A* are considered to be the largest and most important that controlled Mesopotamia during these very early years. Historians have studied the Sumerian king list, but although this list of kings is long, it does not provide much information about most of the rulers. Additionally, dates from these earliest periods often vary depending on the source consulted.

9. Freeman, *Sumerians*, 61.

▼ Clay tablet with an early form of writing



Physical evidence of Sumerian civilization and language
ca. 3200 BC

Walls of Uruk built
ca. 3100–2900 BC

► Disc of Enheduanna,
daughter of Sargon the Great,
carved ca. 2350–2300 BC



Gilgamesh may have lived some-
time during this period
ca. 2800–2500 BC

Sumerian Archaic Period
ca. 3200–2350 BC

3200 BC

after ca. 3200 BC
Cities build walls
for defense

ca. 4000–3200 BC
Early signs of
Sumerian culture



◀ A Sumerian statue,
carved ca. 3300 BC

ca. 3100 BC
Earliest Sumerian
cuneiform writing



▲ Ancient ruins of Ur

Bronze Age ca. 3000–1200 BC

How to Understand a Time Line ^E

G From p. 29: Throughout this text and on the time lines for the earliest periods, we have chosen to use rounded-off circa dates for two reasons: (1) historians aren't certain what the exact dates are, and (2) rounded-off dates are easier for students to remember.



To the Source:
interregnum from the Latin *inter*, meaning “between,” and *rēgnum*, meaning “realm”

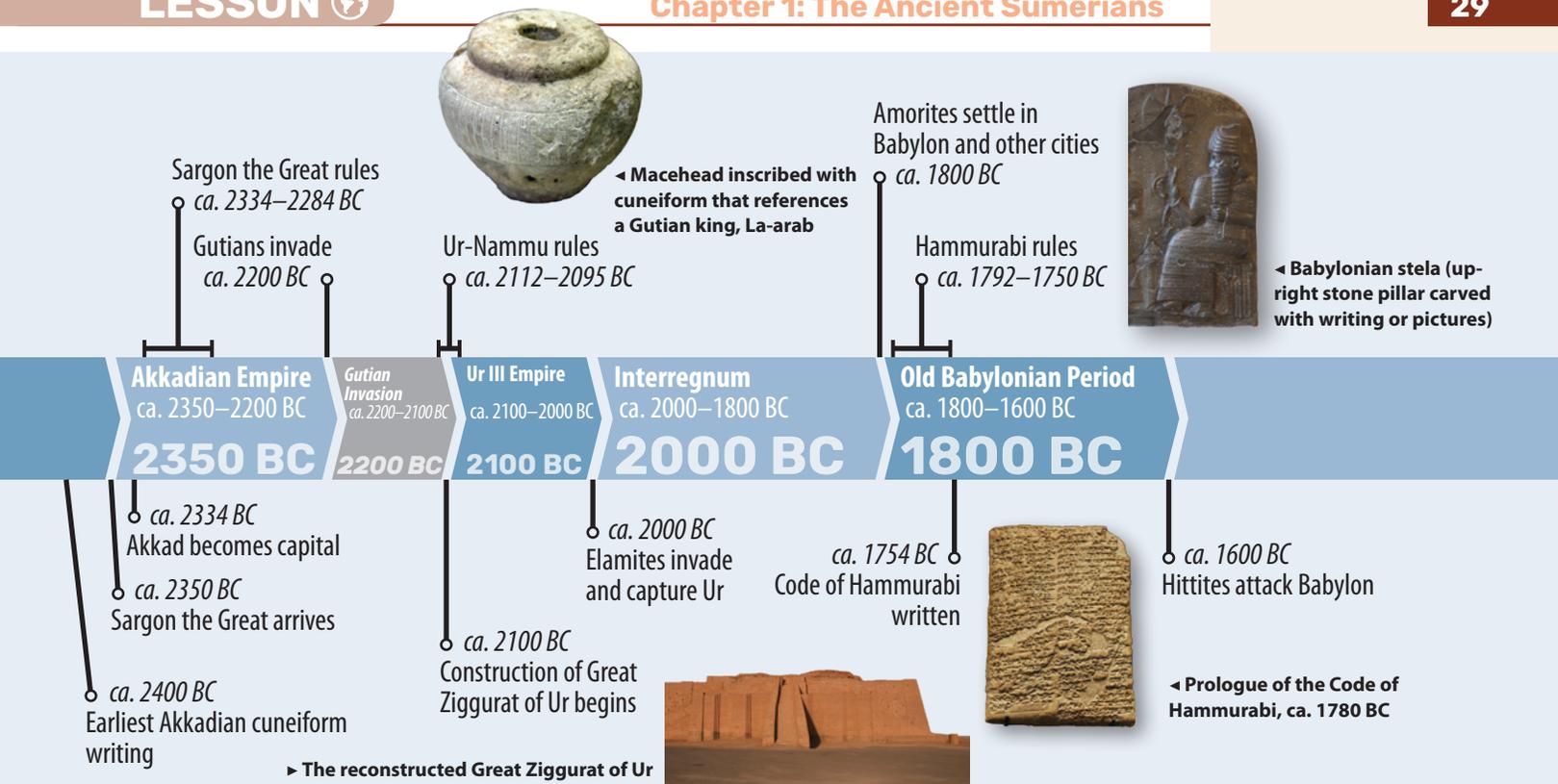
A time line is an important tool that helps us see when major events happened in history and how they were related to each other. For example, did they happen many years apart or very close together? The purpose of the time line shown here is to give you a “big picture” of the most important events in Mesopotamian history that you will learn about in all of unit I. This master time line also includes some extra information that you might find useful to know, such as when a city became the capital of a new empire, when noteworthy people ruled, and one or two other interesting facts or events. So, when you put all of this together, the time line shows you the whole unit in one big picture!

Does the Mesopotamian time line look complicated? Well, it's really not. We are going to make it simple by saying that ancient Mesopotamian history has five main periods. These periods are shaded in blue on the time line so that you can see where one ends and the next begins. How can you remember these periods? Think of them this way: three periods of large, powerful kingdoms that brought parts of Mesopotamia together under one ruler, and two periods when city-states ruled themselves

independently. (You will learn the formal definitions of “kingdom” and “city-state” in the next chapter.) The study of ancient Mesopotamian history starts in Sumer, where great city-states were built during the Sumerian Archaic Period. The first kingdom is the Akkadian Empire, which Sargon the Great of Akkad built. This is the first great empire in history about which we have good, accurate information. The second large empire was known as Ur III. Then came a time we will call the **Interregnum**¹⁰: a period between kingdoms. During the Interregnum, ^{TE}

Don't worry—you do not have to memorize this whole time line in a week! Here in chapter 1, you have the entire unit time line. In the following chapters, we will take apart the time line and show it to you piece by piece, “zooming in” on the key events that you'll learn about in each chapter. Then we will put the time line back together at the end of the unit so that you can again see together in one place all of the important events you have learned about. —A.D.

10. The word “interregnum” is capitalized when it refers to the specific period between kingdoms in Mesopotamian history.



the city-states once again ruled themselves and were not united under one powerful ruler. Finally, the Interregnum was followed by the third period you will learn about in this unit: the Old Babylonian Period.

When did all of these historical periods in Mesopotamian history happen? Well, they happened so long ago that no one knows exactly what the dates are. Do you see the little “ca.” that appears on the time line just before some of the dates? This is an abbreviation for the Latin word *circā*, which means “around.” When wise historians do not know for sure when something happened, they use the “ca.,” as if to say, “We do not really know when this happened, but we think it happened around this time.” It is a way to be honest with their readers that they are not sure. When studying history that happened thousands of years ago, there are not many dates about which historians are absolutely certain. 

One more important thing to know about dates: They often have either BC after them or AD before them. Have you been wondering what those letters mean? They’re actually very important. BC and AD are acronyms, or letters that stand for a longer phrase, and they help us place an event within the overall time line of world history. The BC dates refer to events that happened before what is considered to be the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters BC, which always come after the date, stand for “before Christ.”) BC dates go from highest to lowest. In other words, an event in 3500 BC happened 3,000 years before an event in 500 BC. The AD dates refer to events that happened after the birth of Jesus Christ. (The letters AD, which always go in front of the date, are an abbreviation for the phrase *annō Domini*, which means “in the year of our Lord.”) AD dates go from lowest to highest. This means that the capture and destruction of the city of Jerusalem by the Roman army in AD 70 happened 406 years before the fall of the Roman Empire in AD 476. 

That is all you need to know for now about time lines and dates. Let’s get back to Sumer!

BC vs. BCE

For the most part, everyone used the acronyms BC and AD until the twentieth century, when two new acronyms were created: BCE, for “before common era,” and CE, for “common era.” The dates are exactly the same, so why did the letters change? Some historians and scholars prefer to use BCE and CE because they feel these two terms are more accurate. Another reason is that scripture does not give us the exact year of Jesus’s birth, which means He may not have actually been born in AD 1. Therefore, the terms BC and AD might not be completely correct, which can get confusing. Either way, though, we are talking about the same dates. Nothing has changed except the letters! So, now that you know the difference, you can choose which set of letters you would like to use. In our series, we will continue to use BC and AD, since this is the more traditional way of noting the era. 

Talk It Over

1. Pretend you live in Sumer. Talk about what your life is like. What kind of food do you eat? How do you get from place to place? What is it like to live in a land where all the water comes from irrigation canals?

Answers will vary. Use the details in this chapter to help students create a real-life scenario. For example, the beginning of this chapter lists crops that the farmers planted and livestock that the farmers raised. What would a common meal look like, based on this list of foods? The Sumerians could travel by foot, by boat, or by riding on a donkey. After the invention of the wheel, they could more easily use carts or wagons to move things instead of carrying them on their backs or on animals. Talk about what it would be like to not have running water in the house and to have to get all of the family's water for personal use and watering crops from canals or wells. Discuss how hard and time-consuming it would be to dig canals to build the irrigation systems, and also to maintain them over the years in the harsh desert weather. Talk about what it would be like to work with stone tools or to write on clay tablets with a stylus instead of on smooth paper with a pencil or pen. How well could people communicate with each other with no telephone, television, or other modern technological gadgets? The daily life story found at the end of this unit can also provide other ideas of what life was like in ancient Sumer.

2. If you were an archaeologist looking for artifacts so that you could learn more about the ancient Sumerians, what kinds of things would you like to find buried in the ground? Why?

Answers will vary. Discuss with students what individual artifacts can tell us about the people who lived many years ago. A piece of broken pottery could tell us what their household items looked like and were made of. It might also show you the colors, shapes, and styles of the civilization's art. A painted picture might show a particular event that happened or a tiny slice of daily life (such as people walking with jars on their heads or people playing stringed or wind instruments). Shards of baked clay might have scribbles of the civilization's writing system. Other possibilities that help paint a picture for archaeologists might be tools such as hammers, picks, or digging tools, or military implements such as pieces of spears, swords, or armor.

Practice the Facts

The following are some of your new vocabulary words that are important to remember when learning about ancient Mesopotamia. On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|---|
| 1. Irrigation system | <u> 2 </u> | A. A person who helps his people worship their god (or gods) |
| 2. Priest | <u> 4 </u> | B. A period between kingdoms |
| 3. Polytheist | <u> 7 </u> | C. A god chosen by the people to serve as the special protector or guardian of their city |
| 4. Interregnum | <u> 9 </u> | D. A person who worships only one god |
| 5. Ziggurat | <u> 6 </u> | E. The first important civilization in Mesopotamia |
| 6. Sumer | <u> 5 </u> | F. The style of step pyramid, made of clay bricks, that the ancient Sumerians used as a place to worship their gods |
| 7. Patron god | <u> 10 </u> | G. Having plenty of what you need (usually wealth) to enjoy a successful life |
| 8. Cuneiform | <u> 3 </u> | H. A person who worships more than one god |
| 9. Monotheist | <u> 1 </u> | I. A series of canals that move water from a river or lake to a dry area that needs water |
| 10. Prosperous | <u> 8 </u> | J. The writing system of the ancient Sumerians, created from wedge-shaped symbols |

Write It Down

Describe what religion was like for the Sumerians by completing the sentences in the following paragraph. Religion was very important to the Sumerian people, and they worshipped many gods. In every city, each god had its own temple. Each city also had one particular god that was its patron god and served as the city's protector. In larger cities, the patron god was served by a chief priest or priestess. The Sumerian religious leaders managed the temple's money and worshipped the gods by caring for the statues of them. On feast days, the temple was opened to everyone in the city for a time of celebration.

Know the Reason Why

Complete each of the following sentences by circling *all* of the correct answers.

- Historians think that the time between ca. 4000–3200 BC, before the Sumerian Archaic Period, was probably a peaceful time in history because _____.
 - the cities did not have walls around them
 - there are no pictures showing the people carrying weapons
- Finding buried artifacts from ancient civilizations is important because _____.
 - all artifacts are valuable and worth a lot of money
 - they help us learn who these ancient people were and how they lived
- Creating a writing system was important for the Sumerians because _____.
 - this made it easier for cities to trade and do business with each other
 - without a writing system they could not build temples for the gods
- The Sumerians built irrigation canals because _____.
 - the land was dry and it did not rain often
 - the people liked to ride boats on the canals for fun
 - they needed the canals to bring water to their fields
 - they lived miles away from the rivers



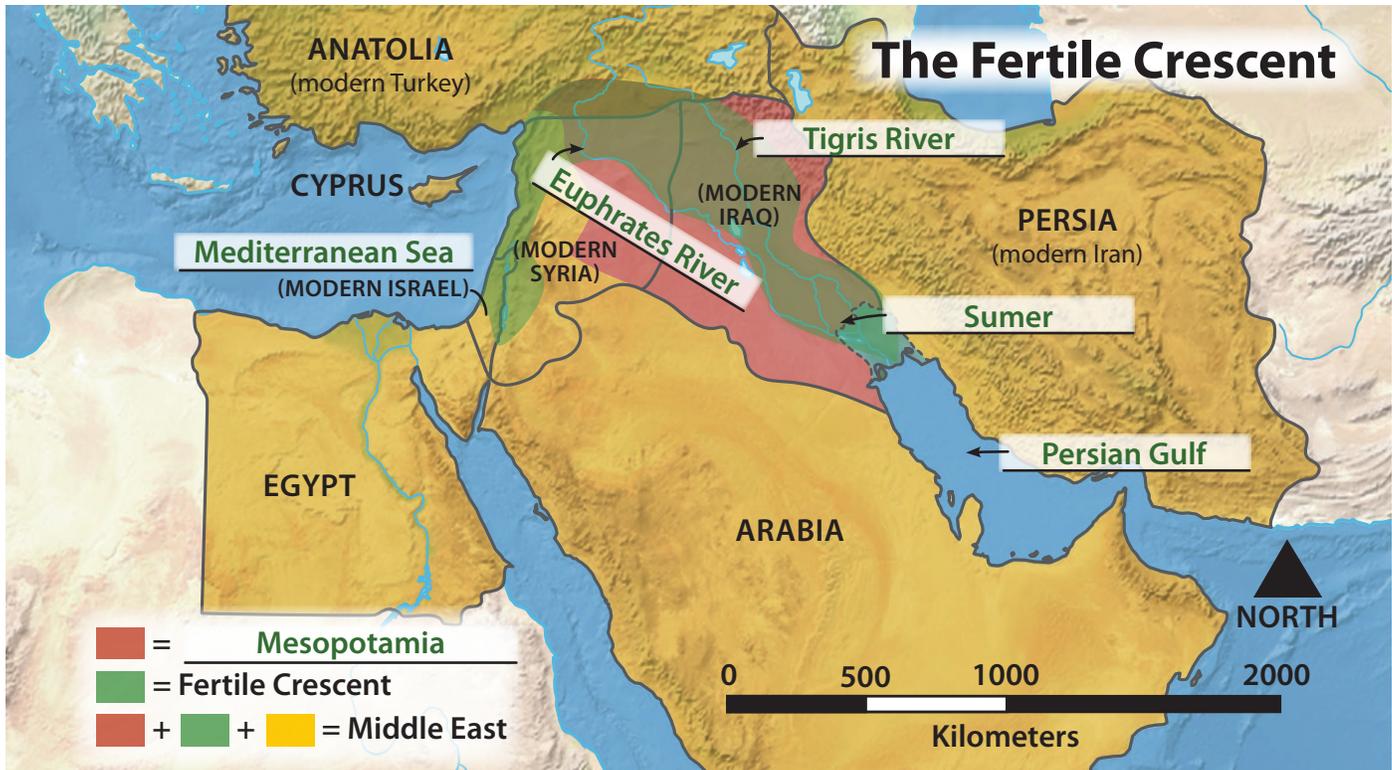
"Sun Temple" in Al-Zibliya area, Sumer, Al-Qadissiyah, Iraq

Find It on the Map TE

The Fertile Crescent

Label the following on the map:

1. Mesopotamia 2. Tigris River 3. Euphrates River 4. Mediterranean Sea 5. Persian Gulf 6. Sumer



Think About It

In the beginning, people didn't know about the wheel. One day someone invented a wheel, and many things in life became easier. Think about how important the wheel is to everyday life. What are some ways that the wheel made life easier for the ancient Mesopotamian people? What are some of the many ways that we use the wheel in our lives today? How has this invention made life simpler and more comfortable? Write down some of your ideas. (Be sure to use complete sentences!)

Answers will vary but should include mention of how the wheel made travel and transportation easier and quicker.

Do It Yourself TE

Before the invention of the wheel, ancient people developed another clever method to transport objects. If they needed to move something that was too heavy for men or animals to drag or carry, they used log rollers. This was a difficult and tiring process. First, they would place several long logs horizontally on the ground. The number of logs they laid down depended on how big the object was that they needed to move. Then they would lift the object on top of the logs. As they began to push the object forward, the logs would roll and the object would move forward a bit. Soon the object would roll off the last log in the back. The workers would take this log from the back and move it to the front, and then they would start pushing the object forward again. Each time the object moved forward enough that it slid off the very last log, they would move that log

to the front again. This happened over and over until the object reached its destination. Imagine how long it would take to move an object even a short distance!

Would you like to try your hand at using log rollers? This activity will help you understand how they worked and why this method was so tricky and time-consuming for the ancient people. Your teacher or parent will supply you with a handful of wooden “log rollers.” Lay the “logs” beside each other in a row and place a stable object, such as a book, on top of them. Then push the object forward slowly. As the object rolls off the back-most “log,” move that “log” to the front and then continue pushing the object forward. Repeat this process until you have moved the object across the room! 

Bonus Activities

Since the land of Sumer did not have many trees, it is unlikely that the Sumerians actually used log rollers themselves; however, this exercise is a good way to help students understand the early processes that ultimately led to the development of the wheel.

TEACHER NOTES

From  **The Wheel** on page 22.

Answers will vary. The wheel is one of six simple machines that made human life easier and allowed civilizations to progress in their development. The invention of the wheel changed every part of daily life. Wheels on carts and wagons made transportation easier and quicker. It was more feasible to transport heavy loads. The pottery wheel made it possible to create jars and containers more easily and quickly. As time went on, wheels were used as spinning wheels, such as waterwheels to propel boats and produce power and, of course, the cog, which is a part of many kinds of machines. What other examples can students think of?

F Referring to the two centuries between the Ur III Empire and the Old Babylonian Period as the “Interregnum” is technically an oversimplification, since the independent Mesopotamian city-states generally functioned as individual kingdoms of their own. However, the nuances of the many different people and political organizations of the city-states during this period are beyond the scope of a grammar-school text. We have chosen to use the term “interregnum” to help young students understand that in between the Ur III Empire and the Old Babylonian Period there was no single formal kingdom or empire ruling Mesopotamia.

H At this point, it could be helpful for students if you draw a simple BC–AD time line with sample dates. You could also illustrate the BC–AD concept by presenting a date without these designations. For example, the date 1000 could be either 1,020 years ago or 3,020 years ago, depending on whether it was 1000 BC or AD 1000.

I Centuries ago, in AD 525, a Roman monk named Dionysius Exiguus created the designations BC and AD to describe time. There are competing theories of how he came up with the date of AD 1 for Jesus’s birth, and he did not provide a detailed explanation himself, so we cannot be sure how he made this determination. Today, most scholars and theologians are comfortable saying Jesus was born within the 7–4 BC time frame.

J This exercise is optional. If you would like to incorporate geography into your students’ study of history, you can have students review the completed maps found in appendix C prior to completing the Find It on the Map exercises. You can find an additional copy of each blank map in appendix D; if you purchased *The Curious Historian’s Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A*, this packet includes a PDF download of the blank maps, should you need to print extra copies for your students.

K This activity is optional and requires a bit of advance preparation. For each student, you will need to take a 1-inch-diameter dowel rod and cut it into approximately six to eight smaller rods of equal length, about 12–15 inches long each.

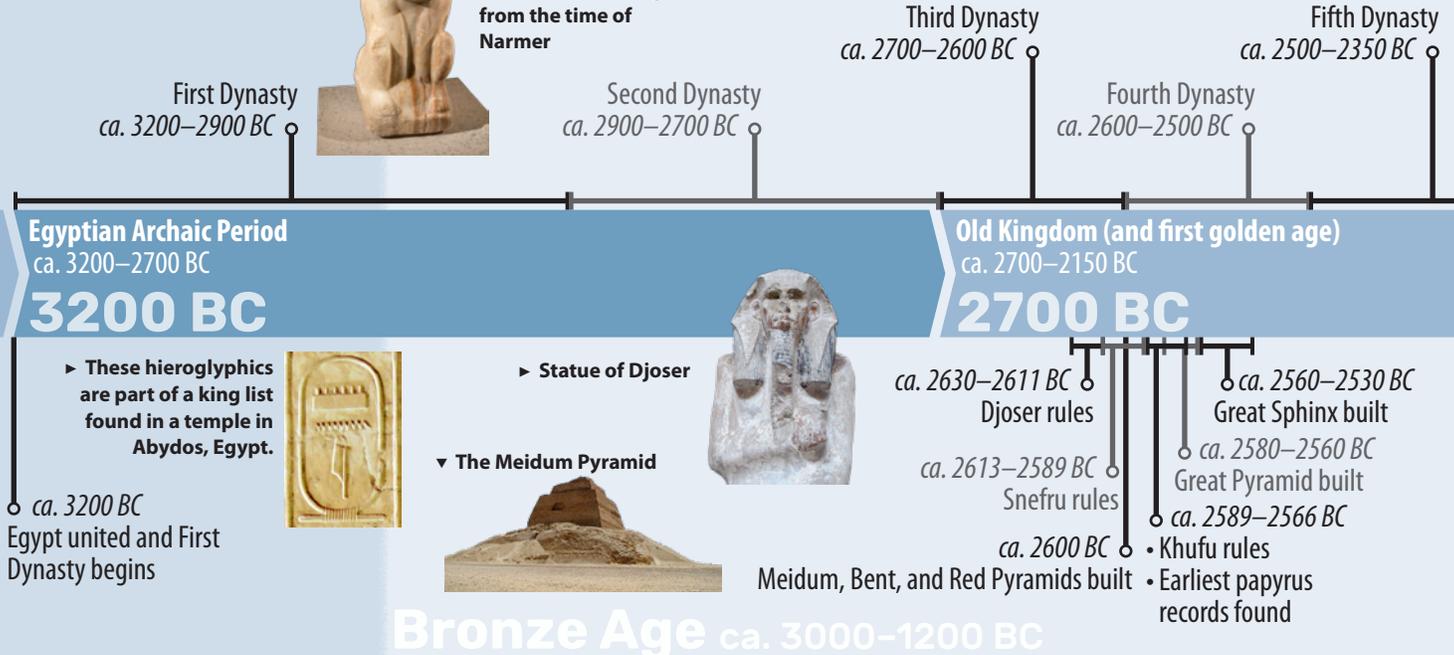
If time permits, you could also divide students into teams and give each team their own set of dowel rods. Then hold a race to see which team can move their object across the room the fastest!

M You can find the chapter 1 quiz in appendix B.

N For select chapters, we have supplied one or two bonus optional activities that students can complete for extra practice. The full activities are typically only viewable in the student edition. Answers are available at ClassicalAcademicPress.com/Pages/The-Curious-Historian, under the “Support” drop-down (found beneath the product photos).

TIMELINE ^A

A As with the unit I time line, the unit II time line lists only the most important rulers and dynasties of Egypt during these historical periods. In order to keep the chronology easier for students to follow and memorize, we will again use rounded-off dates (as we did in unit I for the Mesopotamian periods) for each dynasty and kingdom period. See appendix F for the ancient Egypt timetable.



Chapter 10: The Beginning of Egypt and the Egyptian Archaic Period

IMPORTANT WORDS

WORD	DEFINITION
Hieroglyphics	The writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols. (The individual symbols are called hieroglyphs.)
Pschent	The double crown of ancient Egypt
Dynasty	One family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations
Divine	Coming from, related to, or being a god
Intermediate Period	A time when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners

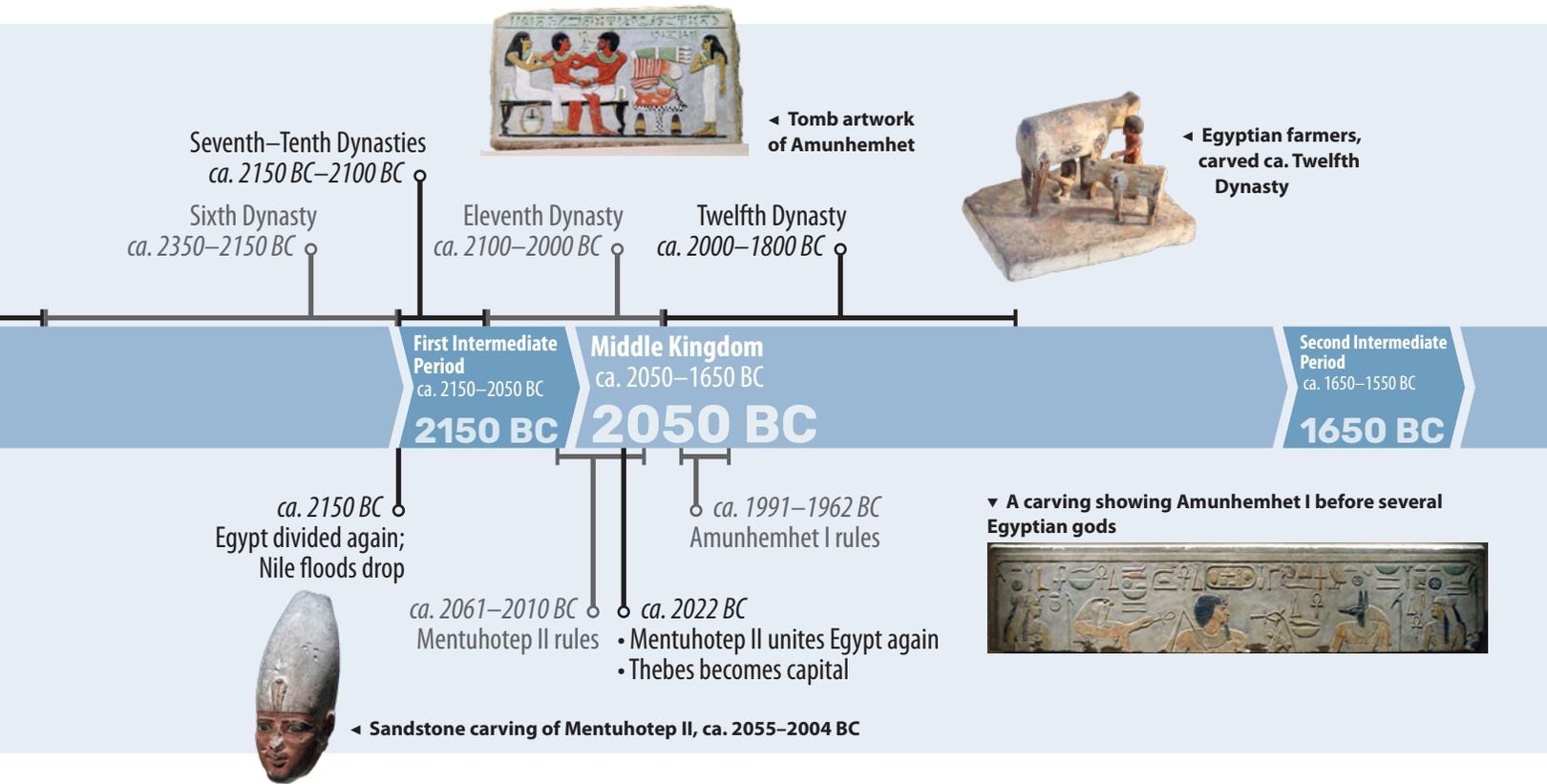
IMPORTANT FIGURES

WORD	DEFINITION
Menes	The legendary pharaoh once believed to have united the land of Egypt
Narmer	One of the pharaohs who helped to unite Upper and Lower Egypt into one kingdom, ca. 3200 BC



Don't forget to learn this chapter's song verse(s)! ^B

B Don't forget to introduce this chapter's song verse(s) to your students. We recommend having them sing the chapter song (up through the verses they have learned) once or twice at the start of each class.



Seventh–Tenth Dynasties
ca. 2150 BC–2100 BC

Sixth Dynasty
ca. 2350–2150 BC

Eleventh Dynasty
ca. 2100–2000 BC

Twelfth Dynasty
ca. 2000–1800 BC

First Intermediate Period
ca. 2150–2050 BC

Middle Kingdom
ca. 2050–1650 BC

Second Intermediate Period
ca. 1650–1550 BC

2150 BC

2050 BC

1650 BC

ca. 2150 BC
Egypt divided again;
Nile floods drop

ca. 2061–2100 BC
Mentuhotep II rules

ca. 1991–1962 BC
Amunhemhet I rules

ca. 2022 BC

- Mentuhotep II unites Egypt again
- Thebes becomes capital

◀ Tomb artwork of Amunhemhet

◀ Egyptian farmers, carved ca. Twelfth Dynasty

◀ Sandstone carving of Mentuhotep II, ca. 2055–2004 BC

▼ A carving showing Amunhemhet I before several Egyptian gods

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS

WORD	DEFINITION
Nile River	The mighty river that created and shaped the land of ancient Egypt. The Nile is more than 4,000 miles long and flows south to north, ending at the Mediterranean Sea.
Upper Egypt	The southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River
Lower Egypt	The northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile River
Egyptian Archaic Period	The earliest period of ancient Egyptian history, ca. 3200–2700 BC, when Egypt was united. This period includes the First and Second Dynasties.
Memphis ¹	The first capital of Egypt and the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt met

▼ Wall decorated with hieroglyphics and a portrait of Mentuhotep II



1. See the alphabetical glossary for an expanded definition.

The Land of Ancient Egypt^C



To the Source:

hieroglyphics from the Greek *hieros*, meaning “sacred,” and *glyphe*, meaning “carving”



▲ A piece of Egyptian pottery with a blessing written in hieroglyphics

▼ Scenes of Egyptian life

What comes to your mind when you think of ancient Egypt? Do you picture the massive pyramids that were built as tombs for the ancient pharaohs? Maybe you think of the fascinating animal-headed gods that the Egyptian people worshipped, or of **hieroglyphics**,¹ the writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols. (The individual symbols are called hieroglyphs.) Or perhaps you have seen some of the ancient drawings of Egyptian men and women with long, straight black hair and bangs. The men wear knee-length garments that look like skirts, and the women wear long, white, close-fitting dresses. Both the men and women are usually drawn with their faces staring off to their left. What do you think they are looking at?

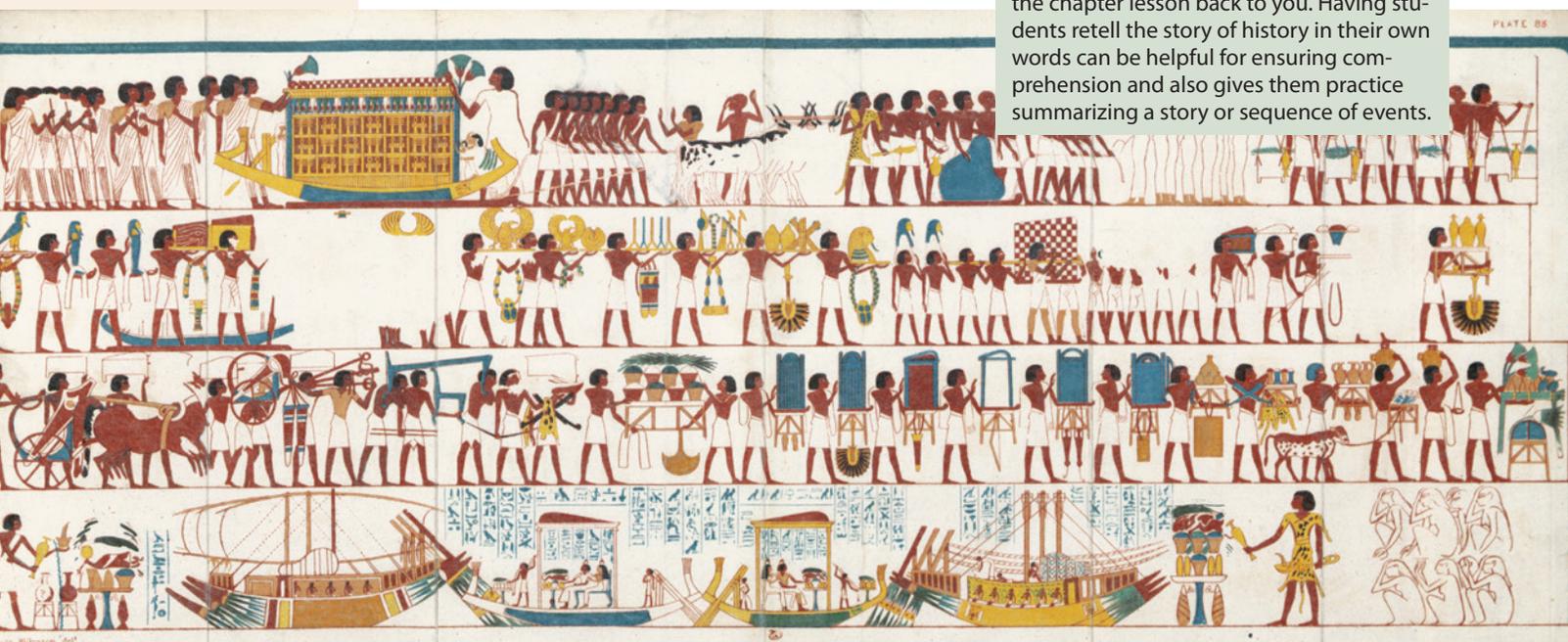
It is hard to imagine another country with a history as long as that of Egypt. The land we know today as Egypt has existed for thousands—and we do mean *thousands*—of years. True, Egypt today does not have the same borders or territory as ancient Egypt. But while other lands came and went from the scene of history, Egypt was always there, a land of its own.

We do not have written records from the time before the pharaohs began to rule Egypt. However, archaeologists have found evidence of villages and other signs of a very early Egyptian culture. Statues, graves, tools, and pieces of clay pottery with pictures painted on them—all of these things help us to know what life was like for the first Egyptians. Based on the paintings, the earliest Egyptians were not very large, and they usually had dark wavy hair and dark skin. Most of their clothing was made from animal skins. They liked wearing beads and jewelry, and they decorated their eyelids with green paint.²

The constant flooding of the Nile River, farming of the land, times of war and construction, and many other things have destroyed most of what the earliest people left behind. What historians do know is that people came to Egypt because of its fertile farmland. At times the people were able to grow more food than they were able to eat! The early Egyptians also raised animals such as sheep, goats, cows,

^CThroughout unit II, you may wish to prompt students to narrate the events of the chapter lesson back to you. Having students retell the story of history in their own words can be helpful for ensuring comprehension and also gives them practice summarizing a story or sequence of events.

2. Burrell, *Oxford First Ancient History*, 46–47.



and pigs. They gathered together in villages, living in huts made from the reeds that grew along the river.³

As in other lands, the people eventually realized that they needed to have some organization in their villages in order to make their lives smoother. Leaders arose to run things in orderly ways. Villages became cities, and each city had its own ruler. Over time, powerful kings called pharaohs came to rule in Egypt.

The early period of the pharaohs is full of legends and myths. Sometimes it is hard to separate fact from fiction. What is clear to historians is that the Egyptian culture, religion, and language that took shape during this early period would last for more than 3,000 years!

The Nile River

Before we find out who was responsible for unifying Egypt into one powerful kingdom, let's look at the geography of Egypt. Like Mesopotamia, Egypt is mostly a desert country. Everything in the land of ancient Egypt was created, shaped, and kept alive by the mighty **Nile River**. This long, winding river begins deep inside Africa and flows for more than 4,000 miles, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. Without the Nile River, Egypt would never have become the powerful kingdom that it was. You'll learn more about the path of the Nile River in the next chapter, but for now, there's one key fact you need to know: The Nile River flows downstream from *south to north*.

The Nile River was so important that it defined what was “up” and what was “down” for the Egyptians. For the ancient Egyptians, “up” meant the south, or upstream toward the mountains deep in the heart of Africa, where the Nile River begins. “Down” meant the north, or downstream where the Nile flowed into the Mediterranean Sea. The Egyptians therefore divided their territory into two parts. **Upper Egypt** was the southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River, and **Lower Egypt** was the northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile, by the Mediterranean Sea. This sounds backward and upside down to us because we're used to thinking of north as “up” and south as “down,” but it was not so for the ancient Egyptians!

3. Burrell, *Oxford First Ancient History*, 46–47.

4. You will learn more about papyrus in chapters 11 and 15.

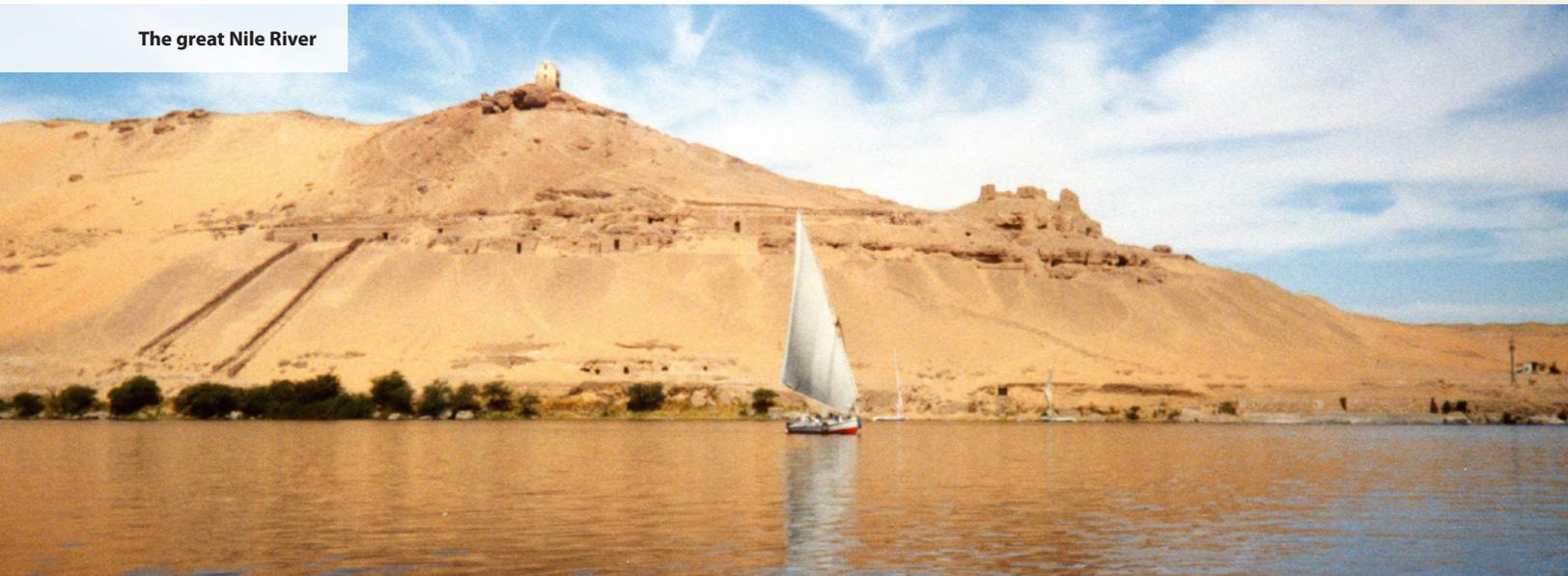
 If you purchased *The Curious Historian's Archive: Extra Resources for Level 1A*, you can read in the Biblical Connections PDF about key biblical figures, such as Abraham and Joseph, who traveled to Egypt to buy food during times of famine in their own lands.

Egyptian Inventions

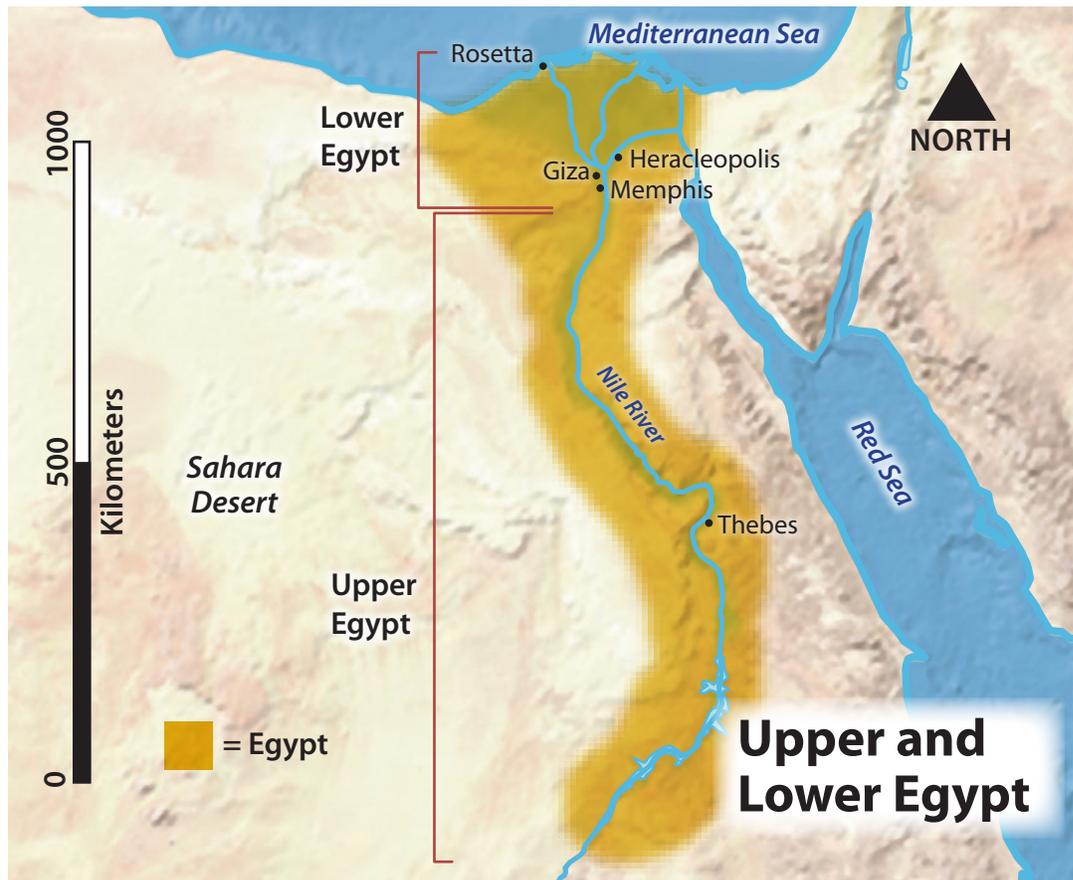
1. Huge stone monuments and smooth-sided pyramids
2. Papyrus as a writing material⁴
3. Mummification (a way of preserving bodies for burial)
4. Writing ink
5. Levers and ramps for use in construction projects
6. Eye makeup
7. Solar calendar with 365 days

 For more on this early period of Egyptian history, see B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A.B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 44–60.

The great Nile River

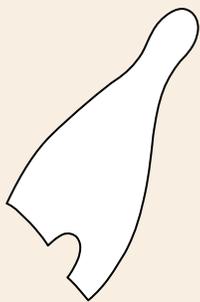


If so much of Egypt is desert, how could the people grow such an abundance of food? It was because of the Nile River! Both Mesopotamia and Egypt were dry lands that often did not receive enough rainwater to keep their crops nourished. The Mesopotamians solved this problem by digging small irrigation canals to help carry water from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to their fields, and basins to store the water from the floods. Similarly, the Egyptians relied on the Nile River and its regular floods to water their crops.

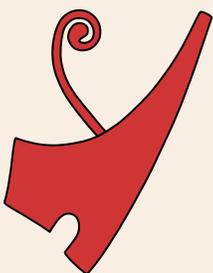


Even though rivers provided water for crops in both lands, Egypt's location had a couple of important advantages. First, the Nile's floodwaters were thick with silt, the dirt that sits at the bottom of a river. In some rivers, silt is mostly sand and not good for the earth. In the case of the Nile, the silt is filled with nutrients and minerals that make the soil good for growing crops. Every year, the floodwaters would spill over the Nile's banks and cover a large part of the land along the river. When the water levels went down again, the nutrient-rich silt was left behind, and the land was ready to produce a large harvest. Second, the Nile River floods occurred in the summer, before the crops were planted. In the fall, when the farmers sowed the wheat, the fields were already well nourished from the floodwaters and ready to receive the seeds.⁵

Because the Egyptians wanted to be prepared in case of a water shortage, they also trapped some of the floodwaters in man-made ponds or basins as the water drained from the land back into the Nile. As in Mesopotamia, these storage basins served as an emergency water supply that could be used if there was a particularly hot growing season and they needed extra water to keep their crops healthy.



▲ The white crown of Upper Egypt



▲ The red crown of Lower Egypt

5. Kathryn A. Bard, "The Emergence of the Egyptian State (c. 3200–2686 BC)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Ian Shaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 69.

The Legend of Menes

In the very beginning of written Egyptian history, the land of Egypt had many rulers who seem to have called themselves kings. Each ruled in a different village or city. During this time, Egypt was divided into Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. One early name for Egypt was “the Two Lands.”

When and how Egypt became one kingdom, no one knows for sure, but historians agree on one thing. Some Egyptians wanted the land to be one kingdom, and there was a group of early rulers that had something to do with conquering and uniting the two halves of Egypt. (We do have a list of ancient Egyptian rulers that is similar to the Sumerian King List. However, as often happens with archaic periods of history, our knowledge is still not always the most accurate.) Uniting Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt into one kingdom took a long time. Many years passed, and many different rulers reigned before the land of Egypt was finally united. It is not until ca. 3200 BC that we can confidently say Egypt became one kingdom.⁶ This event marked the beginning of the **Egyptian Archaic Period**, the period of ancient Egyptian history, ca. 3200–2700 BC, when Egypt was united.



▲ Limestone sculpture, possibly of Pharaoh Menes

A popular legend in Egyptian history says that the ruler who united Upper and Lower Egypt was a pharaoh named **Menes**. Even 3,000 years after Egypt had been united,

the people seem to have still believed in the legend of Menes! Over time, the legend grew larger and more fantastic. Egyptian priests claimed that Menes was a great builder and a conqueror of foreign lands. They said he did many impressive deeds, including changing the direction of the Nile River. It was even said that Menes had invented writing—something he definitely did not do! Some versions of the legend claim that after a very long reign, Menes was carried off by a hippopotamus.⁷

Also according to the legend, Menes made the city of **Memphis** his capital. Memphis was located at the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt met, and was already an important Egyptian city. Many years earlier, Egyptians had settled in Memphis and made it a major trade city between the two halves of Egypt. Once it was the capital, it became more important than ever before.

While it is true that Memphis became the first capital of Egypt, most historians now agree that Menes was probably a legendary king and not a real person. Instead, one of the pharaohs thought to have unified Egypt was actually a man named **Narmer**. Why



▲ The double crown (pschent) of Egypt

▼ The two sides of the Narmer Palette



The Narmer Palette has artwork on both sides showing Narmer’s victory. The pictures on the stone were used to show that Narmer had earned the right to rule over both Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt. Remember, it was common at the time for kings to exaggerate their victories so that they would seem very successful and mighty in battle. On the Narmer Palette, the pharaoh is shown wearing his special royal garments, and he is the tallest figure in the picture. His officials are dressed in royal garments, too, but these men are all shorter than Narmer. Of course, no one could be as tall as the pharaoh, at least in the Egyptians’ minds! The captured prisoners are much, much smaller than the Egyptians and wear almost no clothes: signs that they were the defeated enemy and the Egyptians were the victors.⁸ —A.D.

6. Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Blackwell History of the Ancient World (Oxford: Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2011), 33–35.

7. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Aubrey De Selincourt, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 132–133.

8. Bard, “Emergence of the Egyptian State,” 79–81.

EThe red crown of Lower Egypt was called the *deshret*, and the white crown of Upper Egypt was called the *hedjet*.

? Who Else?

Is there another historical person we have already studied who also united two or more kingdoms? Think back to the Sumerian rulers that you learned about in unit I.

Students will hopefully remember Sargon the Great and how he united the various city-states of Sumer into one united kingdom called the Akkadian Empire.

To the Source:

dynasty from the Greek *dynasthai*, meaning “to be able” or “to have power”

? What’s in a Name?

Most names have a meaning connected to them. Maybe your parents chose your name because it had a special meaning that was important to them. Or perhaps you were named after a beloved family member, such as your father or grandmother. Do you know what your name means and why it was chosen?

Answers will vary.

GThese 31 dynasties ruled Egypt until the time of Alexander the Great and his conquest of Egypt in 332 BC. To help put the length of the 300-year First Dynasty in perspective for students, you might discuss with them how the United States has only existed as an independent country since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Nearly the entirety of our nation’s history could fit into the span of just one dynasty of ancient Egypt.

HFor this reason, it is also known as the Early Dynastic Period.

did historians change their minds about Menes? Well, about a hundred years ago, archaeologists discovered a ceremonial stone called the Narmer Palette. This stone is carved with a picture of a king, identified as Narmer, triumphing over the people who lived in Lower Egypt. On one side of the Narmer Palette, the pharaoh is shown wearing a red crown, which represented Lower Egypt (the north). On the other side, he is wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt (the south). Because the stone shows Narmer wearing both crowns, it represents that he had become the king over Upper and Lower Egypt. Later on, the red crown and the white crown were combined to create a double crown, called the **pschent** (pronounced “skent”).⁹

In the past, some historians suggested that Menes and Narmer were the same person. Now, however, historians think that Menes was actually a title that the kings of Egypt (who each had many names) took for themselves. Since the word “Menes” means “he who endures,” it would have made the rulers sound very important. All of this debate over Menes and Narmer is an example of how our understanding of ancient history changes over time as we make new discoveries and learn new ways of thinking about the past.⁹

The victories of the early kings, including Narmer, led to a huge change in Egyptian history. Instead of a number of kings from different families ruling in many cities, one pharaoh at a time ruled over a united Egypt. When the pharaoh died, he was usually replaced by his son or another member of his family. (Sometimes the next pharaoh was a woman!) A group of pharaohs that came from the same family made up a dynasty. A **dynasty** is one family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations.

From time to time, someone from a different family might take over the throne and become pharaoh. This usually meant the start of a new dynasty. Over the course of about 3,000 years, 31 dynasties ruled over ancient Egypt.⁹ The Egyptian Archaic Period includes the First and Second Dynasties. The First Dynasty ruled Egypt for about 300 years, ca. 3200–2900 BC.

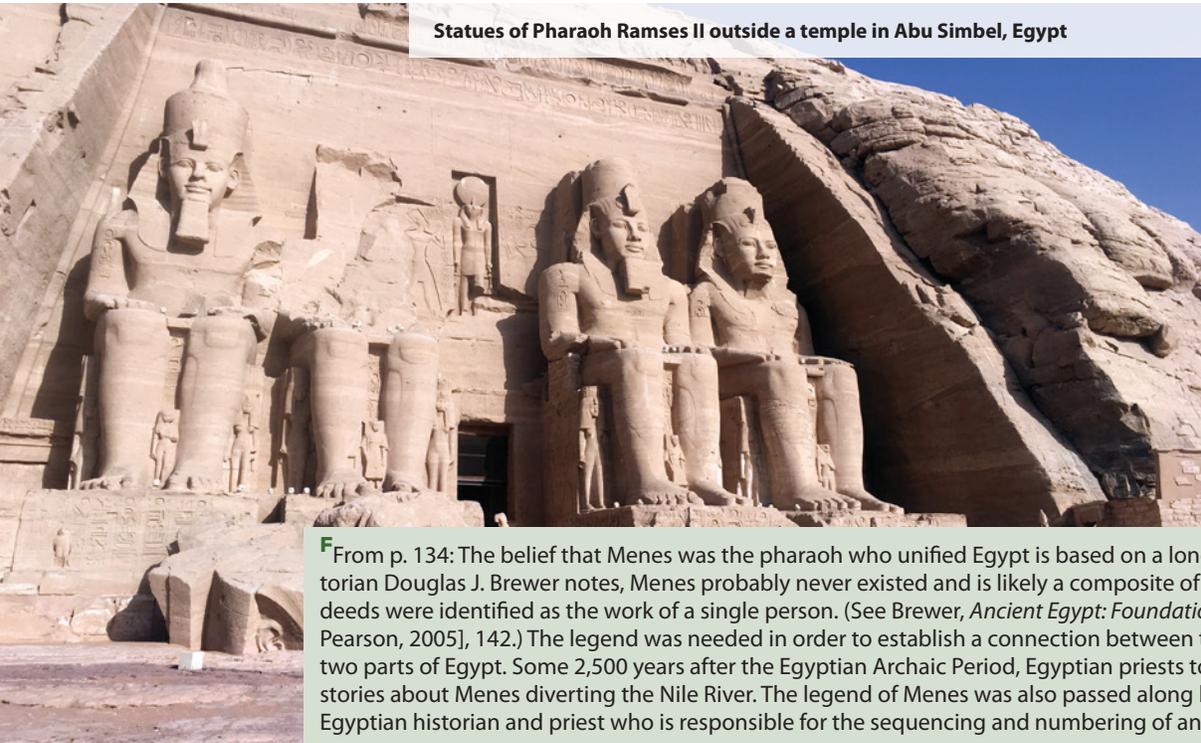
The Power of the Pharaoh

Another important change that happened once Egypt was united under one ruler was the level of power the pharaoh held. The pharaoh of Egypt now had more power than any individual king before him ever did. The pharaoh controlled the military and was in charge of the scribes, craftsmen, and religious leaders. He

For the Egyptians, a person’s name could be one word or several words. Each name had a particular meaning that might be connected to an emotion or an idea, or to an important god. For example, the Egyptian word *nefer* meant “good” or “beautiful,” so an Egyptian whose name was Nefertiti would reflect the idea of being good or beautiful. Pharaoh Amunhemhet I, whom you will learn about in chapter 14, was named after Amun, the Egyptian god of mysteries and air. The name Amunhemhet meant “Amun is the head.”⁹ When someone became pharaoh, he (or sometimes she) took on many additional names. In fact, it was typical for a pharaoh to have at least five names! One of these names, the Horus name, was given to the pharaoh at the start of his reign in order to associate him with Horus, the god believed to protect the pharaoh. (You will learn about Horus in chapter 16.) Hor-Aha, the Horus name of one early pharaoh, means “the Horus who strikes.”

—A.D.

9. David P. Silverman, ed., *Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 235.



Statues of Pharaoh Ramses II outside a temple in Abu Simbel, Egypt

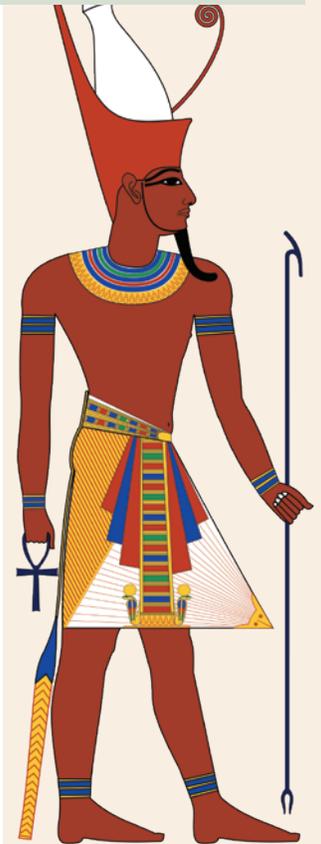
F From p. 134: The belief that Menes was the pharaoh who unified Egypt is based on a long oral history tradition. As historian Douglas J. Brewer notes, Menes probably never existed and is likely a composite of many real-life individuals whose deeds were identified as the work of a single person. (See Brewer, *Ancient Egypt: Foundations of a Civilization* [New York: Pearson, 2005], 142.) The legend was needed in order to establish a connection between the first king and the unity of the two parts of Egypt. Some 2,500 years after the Egyptian Archaic Period, Egyptian priests told the Greek historian Herodotus stories about Menes diverting the Nile River. The legend of Menes was also passed along by Manetho, a third-century BC Egyptian historian and priest who is responsible for the sequencing and numbering of ancient Egypt's dynasties.

organized the labors of the common people and gave wealth and favors to the local governors who helped him rule.

The pharaoh also was believed to serve as a kind of divine messenger between the gods and the people. The word “**divine**” means “coming from, related to, or being a god.” Did the Egyptians really think that their pharaoh was divine? Our sources do not tell us for certain, but this belief would not have been unusual. In many polytheistic ancient cultures, the people believed that their gods had chosen their king to rule over them and had given him special powers.

How would you rule if you thought you were like a god? The Egyptians, like other ancient peoples, believed that the gods could do whatever they wanted to do. No one dared make a god or goddess angry, because if a deity became angry, then crops might stop growing, armies might invade, and all kinds of unexpected, terrible events might happen. By making themselves seem like the gods, the pharaohs would have been able to claim a level of power that nobody else could. It probably appeared as though the pharaohs could do anything they wanted!

But the pharaohs did not truly have unlimited powers. Maybe you have read a book or seen a movie in which a mighty pharaoh sits on a great throne, barking orders to his scared followers who rush to carry out his demands. It was not really like that in ancient Egypt. Of course, the pharaohs were powerful, and some of them did rule harshly. But the pharaohs had many responsibilities. They had to pay their soldiers, often with gifts of land. They needed to support religious traditions and ceremonies in order to keep the powerful priests happy. The pharaohs spent huge amounts of money on public building projects, such as temples and pyramids. They also had to keep the local governors happy by granting them favors, such as land and titles. The pharaohs paid for all of these things with taxes, but they had to be careful to not overtax the people. Imagine having priests, governors, and many others coming to you all day long, looking for favors. This was often the life of a pharaoh!



 For photos of ancient Egyptian artifacts, see the TCH1A Go Deeper PDF, <http://capress.link/tch1agd>.

! This was the very first recorded labor strike in history.

What about the common Egyptian people who lived under the pharaoh? Did they just follow his orders all of the time? Well, the pharaoh and his officials were certainly powerful, but the Egyptian people did sometimes speak up and complain when they experienced bad treatment. For example, during the reign of the powerful Ramses III, workers stopped building the pharaoh's tomb until they received their promised supplies of grain. Ramses III was forced to give the people what they wanted or be left with an unfinished tomb!¹⁰ □

The Egyptian people are often remembered for their beliefs in gods and magic, but they were also very practical, especially when it came to the Nile River. After all, the Egyptians' prosperity and very survival depended on the river. Many myths were told about the Nile, and the people celebrated its flooding every year with religious rituals. It is possible that some Egyptians believed that the mighty pharaoh had the divine power to control the river. In reality, the pharaoh knew the river was very important, so he and the farmers carefully watched the river. They became experts at predicting how much water was going to come in that year's floods, and even measured the depth of the Nile each year! If there was more water than the year before, there would be more food from the harvests, and that would mean the pharaoh could collect more taxes. But if there was a drought, then the pharaoh could be in trouble. His people would be hungry, and he would not be able to collect the taxes he needed to pay for his army, his building projects, and all of his favors. The pharaoh may have had power, but he was not as powerful as the river!

▼ The Nile River
near its source, Lake Victoria

10. William F. Edgerton, "The Strikes in Ramses III's Twenty-Ninth Year," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 10, no. 3 (July 1951): 137–145.



As you can see, the pharaohs of Egypt were indeed mighty rulers. Yet, in one ancient Egyptian tomb, archaeologists found a sad poem about pharaohs. Part of it reads:

What of their places?
Their walls have crumbled,
Their places are gone,
As if they had never been!¹¹

The pharaohs were human like you and me—and the Egyptians knew it!

Dynasties and Disorganization

Even though Egypt has been one land through the years, it was ruled by many different dynasties of pharaohs. Sometimes these dynasties ruled for a long time, perhaps several centuries. Other times, a dynasty came and went very quickly. In between these long, powerful dynasties, Egypt also experienced short **intermediate** periods, or times when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners. During some of these intermediate periods, rulers from several different dynasties tried to take control of the kingdom.

So, what do we really mean when we say that the land we know as Egypt has existed since ca. 3200 BC? Well, sometimes Egypt was one unified land ruled by one pharaoh. And sometimes Egypt was politically divided. During some of its intermediate periods, Egypt was divided into two lands with two rulers, one ruling Upper Egypt and one ruling Lower Egypt. And during other intermediate periods, Egypt was under the rule of foreigners, or under several different kings who ruled over various parts of the whole kingdom. But no matter the ruler or the state of the kingdom, the territory and people of Egypt lived on.

How, then, is Egyptian history different from Mesopotamian history? There are many differences, and we can't mention all of them here. But one important difference stands out. In Mesopotamia, the kingdoms were constantly changing, mostly because one group of people would invade and conquer the people who lived there. Then, years later, another new group of people would invade and conquer them. For example, do you remember how the Akkadians conquered the Sumerians, and then later the Gutians conquered some of the city-states after the Akkadian Empire fell? These changes in power happened over and over again as different people with their own languages and cultures took charge of the land of Mesopotamia.

In Egypt, the rulers and dynasties changed, but most of the time the territory known as Egypt was still ruled by Egyptian people under one Egyptian pharaoh. Since Egypt also had one river, one language, and one set of religious beliefs, it was much easier for the land to stay unified under one ruler.

Now that you understand this, it's time to take a closer look at exactly how this one river, the mighty Nile, helped keep Egypt together and make it such a powerful kingdom.



To the Source:

intermediate from the Latin *intermedius*, meaning “in the middle”

Unlike Mesopotamia, with its numerous individual territories and cultures, Egypt was easier to keep united. From a basic geographical stance, Egypt was also easier to defend since it had water on only one side and the desert on the other side. Thus, Egypt experienced much longer periods of stability under strong rulers and shorter intermediate periods during ca. 3200–1500 BC, the time period we are focusing on in this book.

To expand on this thought, sometimes Egyptian rulers conquered their neighbors, including Nubia to the south, Libya to the west, and Canaan to the northeast. Other times, pharaohs simply concentrated on ruling the Egyptian heartland: what the Egyptians called “the Two Lands,” meaning Upper and Lower Egypt. But regardless of the political situation and however much the borders of territory shifted, deep in its core around the Nile River Egypt was always Egypt!

11. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, vol. 1, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 196.

Talk It Over

Imagine that you are the pharaoh of Egypt. What kind of power and authority would you have as ruler? What would your responsibilities be? In what ways would your power be limited?

Answers will vary. The pharaoh of Egypt had a great deal of power and authority, including control of the military and the power of life and death over his subjects. But great responsibility came with that power. The pharaoh had to appease many important people and groups within the kingdom, including the army, the courts, the priests, and the local governors. Otherwise, they may not support him. The pharaoh had the power to order impressive building projects, such as new monuments and temples, but his ability to pay for these projects depended on how much he could tax the people. The pharaoh's ability to tax the people was largely dependent on the annual water levels of the Nile and how plentiful the harvests were each year. The Egyptian people were also not as slavishly obedient as they are sometimes portrayed. If, for example, the pharaoh did not keep his workers satisfied, they might refuse to continue the construction of his monument or tomb. Egypt also had courts, which meant that the people had a place to bring forward grievances against their neighbors and even against the administration. Surely, the pharaohs had impressive levels of authority, but in the end no individual pharaoh was as powerful or as influential as the culture, language, religion, and economy that flourished in the land of Egypt for thousands of years.

Practice the Facts

On the line provided, write the number of the correct vocabulary word beside each definition.

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|---|
| 1. Lower Egypt | <u> 4 </u> | A. The southern part of Egypt that was upstream on the Nile River |
| 2. Dynasty | <u> 5 </u> | B. Coming from, related to, or being a god |
| 3. Polytheist | <u> 8 </u> | C. The double crown of ancient Egypt |
| 4. Upper Egypt | <u> 7 </u> | D. The first capital of Egypt and the place along the Nile River where Upper and Lower Egypt meet |
| 5. Divine | <u> 1 </u> | E. The northern part of Egypt that was downstream on the Nile River |
| 6. Hieroglyphics | <u> 2 </u> | F. One family that rules over a kingdom or country for a number of generations |
| 7. Memphis | <u> 6 </u> | G. The writing system of the ancient Egyptians, created from pictures and symbols |
| 8. Pschent | <u> 9 </u> | H. A time when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners |
| 9. Intermediate period | <u> 3 </u> | I. A person who worships more than one god |

True or False?

If the sentence is true, circle *T*. If the sentence is false, circle *F*.

- Uniting Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt into one kingdom was easy to do and happened quickly. T (F)
- The Egyptians, like the Mesopotamians, used irrigation basins to store emergency supplies of water for their crops. (T) F
- Before the Egyptian Archaic Period, ca. 3200 BC, Egypt had only one king. T (F)
- The Nile River flooded late in the growing season, after the crops were already fully grown. T (F)
- Historians think Narmer helped unify Egypt because pictures on a ceremonial stone show him wearing the crowns of both Upper and Lower Egypt. (T) F
- When the people believed the pharaohs were divine, the rulers were able to claim a new level of power. (T) F
- A total of 50 dynasties ruled over the land of Egypt. T (F)

Which Is Which?

Using what you learned in unit I and in this chapter, see if you can finish filling in the blanks in the following chart with some more ways ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt were different from each other. Write *M* next to the words or phrases that refer to Mesopotamia, and *E* beside the words or phrases that refer to Egypt.

Important river(s)	The Nile <u> E </u>	The Tigris and the Euphrates <u> M </u>
Geographical location	Middle East <u> M </u>	Northern Africa <u> E </u>
Purpose of the pyramids	Temples <u> M </u>	Tombs <u> E </u>
Title of the ruler	King or emperor <u> M </u>	Pharaoh <u> E </u>
Writing system	Hieroglyphics <u> E </u>	Cuneiform <u> M </u>

Write It Down

Choose the correct words from the word bank to fill in the blanks in each of the following sentences. (*Hint:* Not all of the words in the word bank will be used in this exercise!)

Great Sphinx • cuneiform • archaeology • Nile • intermediate period • hieroglyphics •
 • history • dynasty • pschent • pharaoh • Memphis • archaic period • Tigris

- The title for a king of Egypt is pharaoh .
- History is a record of events that happened in the past.
- One family that rules over a country for a number of generations is called a dynasty .
- Memphis was the first capital of Egypt and an important trading city.
- The famous statue outside the city of Giza of a mythical creature with a lion body and a human head is the Great Sphinx .
- An intermediate period is a time in Egyptian history when Egypt was politically divided or ruled by foreigners.
- The writing system of the ancient Egyptians is known as hieroglyphics .
- The mighty Nile River created and shaped the land of ancient Egypt.
- The double crown of Egypt is called the pschent .

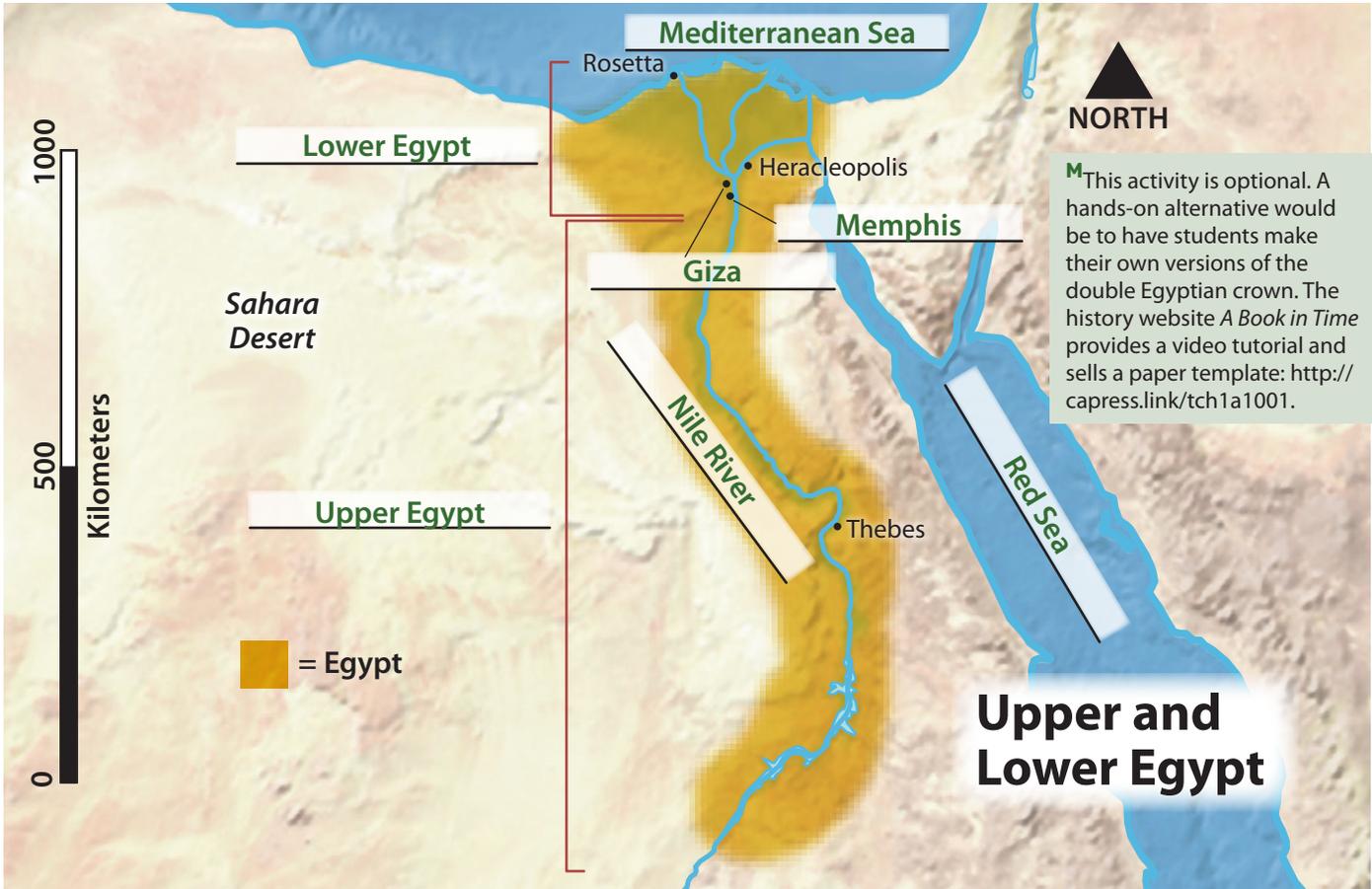
Find It on the Map

This exercise is optional.

Upper and Lower Egypt

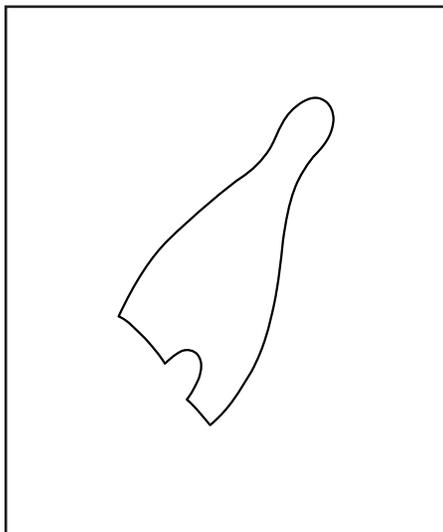
Label the following on the map:

1. Upper Egypt
2. Lower Egypt
3. Nile River
4. Red Sea
5. Mediterranean Sea
6. Memphis
7. Giza

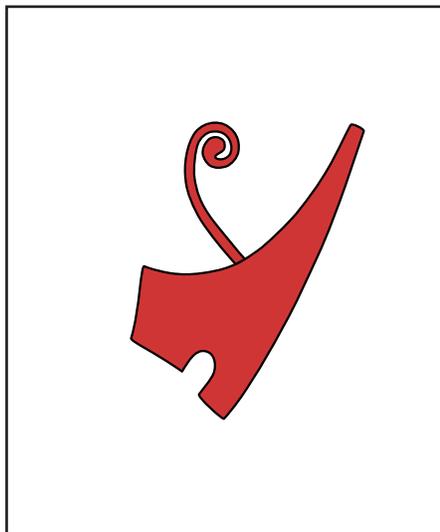


Make It Yourself

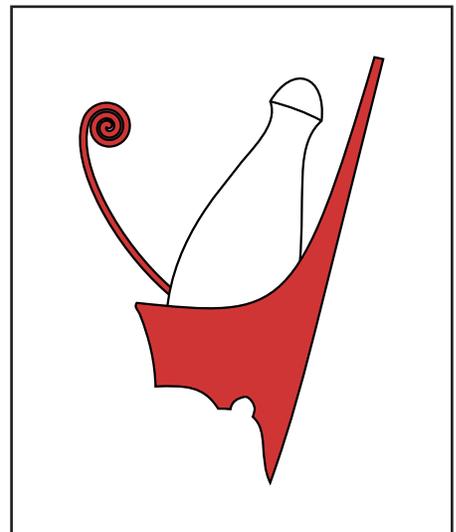
Draw a picture of each of the three crowns of Egypt in the boxes below. Then write the name of the kingdom the crown represented beneath each picture.



Upper Egypt



Lower Egypt



Unified Egypt