NAME \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL STUDIES

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ CHAPTER ONE



SECTION ONE

* Early Humans
* Neolithic Times

SECTION TWO

* Mesopotamia’s Civilization
* A Skilled People
* Sargon and Hammurabi

SECTION THREE

* The Assyrians
* The Chaldeans

SECTION ONE

Early Humans

History is the story of humans in the past. It tells what they did and what happened to them. **Historians** (hih • STOHR• ee• uhns) are people who study and write about the human past. They tell us that history began about 5,500 years ago, when people first began to write. But the story of people really begins in prehistory—the time *before* people developed writing.

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Tools of Discovery

What we know about the earliest people comes from the things they left behind. Scientists have worked to uncover clues about early human life. **Archaeologists** (AHR • kee • AH • luh • jihsts)hunt for evidence buried in the ground where settlements might once have been. They dig up and study **artifacts** (AHR • tih • FAKTS)—weapons, tools, and other things made by humans. They also look for **fossils** (FAH • suhls)—traces of plants or animals that have been preserved in rock.

**Anthropologists** (AN • thruh • PAH• luh • jihsts) focus on human society. They study how humans developed and how they related to one another. Historians call the early period of human history the Stone Age. The name comes from the fact that people during this time used stone to make tools and weapons. The earliest part of the period is the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. *Paleolithic* means “old stone” in the Greek language. Paleolithic times began roughly 2.5 million years ago and lasted until around 8000 B.C.

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Who Were the Hunter-Gatherers?

Try to imagine the world during the Stone Age, long before any roadways, farms, or villagesexisted. Early humans spent most of their time searching for food. They hunted animals, caught fish, ate insects, and gathered nuts, berries, fruits, grains, and plants.

Because they hunted and gathered, Paleolithic people were always on the move. They were **nomads** (NOH• MADS), or people who regularly move from place to place. They traveled in bands of 30 or so members because it was safer and made the search for food easier.

Men and women did different taskswithin the group. Women stayed close to the campsite, which was typically near a stream or other water source. They looked after the children and searched nearby woods and meadows for berries, nuts, and grains.

Men hunted animals—an activity that sometimes took them far from camp. They had to learn the habits of animals and make tools for the kill. At first, they used clubs or drove the animals off cliffs. Over time, Paleolithic people invented spears, traps, and bows and arrows.

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Adapting to the Environment

The way that Paleolithic people lived depended on where they lived. Those in warm climates needed little clothing or shelter. People in cold climates sought protection from the weather in caves. Over time, Paleolithic people created new kinds of shelter. The most common was probably made of animal hides held up by wooden poles.

Paleolithic people made a life-changing discovery when they learned to tame fire. Fire gave warmth to those gathered around it. It lit the darkness and scared away wild animals. Food cooked over the fire tasted better and was easier to digest. In addition, smoked meat could be kept longer.

Archaeologists believe that early humans started fires by rubbing two pieces of wood together. Paleolithic people later made drilllike wooden tools to start fires.

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What Were the Ice Ages?

Fire was a key to the survival of Paleolithic people during the Ice Ages. These were long periods of extreme cold. The last Ice Age began about 100,000 B.C. From then until about 8000 B.C., thick ice sheets covered parts of Europe, Asia, and North America.

The Ice Age was a threat to human life. People risked death from the cold and also from hunger. Early humans had to adapt by changing their diet, building sturdier shelters, and using animal furs to make warm clothing. The mastery of fire helped people live in this environment.

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Language, Art, and Religion

Another advance in Paleolithic times was the development of spoken language. Language made it far easier for people to work together and to pass on knowledge.

Early people expressed themselves not only in words but in art. They crushed yellow, black, and red rocks to make powders for paint. Then they dabbed this on cave walls, creating scenes of lions, oxen, panthers, and other animals.

Historians are not sure why these cave paintings were created. They may have had religious meaning. Early people also might have thought that painting an animal would bring good luck in the hunt.

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The Invention of Tools

Paleolithic people were the first to use **technology** (tehk •NAH• luh • jee)—tools and methods to help humans perform tasks. People often used a hard stone called flint to make tools. By hitting flint with a hard stone, they could make it flake into pieces with very sharp edges. To make hand axes or hunting spears, they tied wooden poles to pieces of flint that were the right shape for the tool.

Over time, early people grew more skilled at making tools. They crafted smaller and sharper tools, such as fishhooks and needles made from animal bones. They used needles to make nets and baskets and to sew hides together for clothing.

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1. Historians call the early period of human history the

 A. Iron Age C. Ancient Age

B. Bronze Age D. Stone Age

2. The Paleolithic people were able to survive because they used

 A. rocks. C. water.

 B. fire. D. caves.

3. One of the most important technologies used by the Paleolithic people was

 A. tools. C. art.

 B. language. D. religion.

4. How are fossils and artifacts different?

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5. Who are archaeologists and what do they study?

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Neolithic Times

After the last Ice Age ended, people began to change their way of life. They began to **domesticate** (duh•MEHS• tih • KAYT), or tame animals and plants for human use. Animals

provided meat, milk, and wool. They also carried goods and pulled carts.

In addition, people also learned how to grow food. For the first time, people could stay in one place to grow grains and vegetables. Gradually, farming replaced hunting and gathering.

This change in the way people lived marked the beginning of the Neolithic Age, or New Stone Age, which began about 8000 B.C. and lasted until about 4000 B.C.

Why Was Farming Important?

Historians call the changes in the Neolithic Age the farming revolution. The word *revolution* refers to changes that greatly affect many areas of life. Some historians consider the farming revolution the most important event in human history.

Farming did not begin in one region and spread. People in different parts of the world discovered how to grow crops at about the same time. In Asia, people grew wheat, barley, rice, soybeans, and a grain called millet. In Mexico, farmers grew corn, squash, and potatoes. In Africa, they grew millet and a grain called sorghum.

The Growth of Villages

People who farmed could settle in one place. Herders remained nomadic and drove their animalswherever they could find grazing land. Farmers, however, had to stay close to their fields to water the plants, keep hungry animals away, and harvest their crops. They began to live in villages, where they built permanent homes.

During the Neolithic Age, villages were started in Europe, India, Egypt, China, and Mexico. The earliest known communities have been found in the Middle East. One of the oldest is **Jericho** (JEHR • ih • KOH) in the West Bank between what are now Israel and Jordan. This city dates back to about 8000 B.C.

Another well-known Neolithic community is **Çatal Hüyük** (chah • TAHL hoo • YOOK) in present-day Turkey. Little of it remains, but it was home to some 6,000 people between about 6700 B.C. and 5700 B.C. They lived in simple mud-brick houses that were packed tightly together and decorated inside with wall paintings. They used other buildings as places of worship. Along with farming, the people hunted, raised sheep and goats, and ate fish and bird eggs from nearby marshes.

The Benefits of a Settled Life

The shift to settled life brought Neolithic people greater security than they had ever known. Steady food supplies meant healthy, growing populations. With a bigger population, there were more workers to produce a bigger crop.

Because villagers produced more than enough to eat, they began to trade their extra foodstuffs. They traded with people in their own communities and also with people who lived in other areas.

People began to practice **specialization** (SPEH • shuh• luh •ZAY• shuhn), or the development of different kinds of jobs. Because not everyone was needed for farming, some people had the time to develop other types of skills. They made pottery from clay to store their grain and other foods. They used plant fibers to make mats and to weave cloth. These craftspeople, like farmers, also took part in trade. They exchanged the things they made for goods they did not have.

In late Neolithic times, people continued to make advances. Toolmakers created better farming tools, such as the sickle for cutting grain. In some places, people began to work with metals. At first they used copper. They heated rocks to melt the copper inside and then poured it into molds for tools and weapons.

After 4000 B.C., craftspeople in western Asia mixed copper and tin to form bronze. Bronze was harder and longer lasting than copper. It became widely used between 3000 B.C. and 1200 B.C., the period known as the Bronze Age.

1. What revolutionary change took place during the Neolithic Age?

 A. simple shelters C. farming

 B. hunting D. toolmaking

2. Which are two well-known Neolithic communities?

 A. Europe and China C. Jericho and Catal Hüyuk

 B. Mexico and Egypt D. Babylon and Uruk

3. How did the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages differ?

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4. How did domesticating animals help the Neolithic people?

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SECTION TWO

Mesopotamia’s Civilization

Over thousands of years, some of the early farming villages developed into civilizations. **Civilizations** (SIH • vuh • luh • ZAY • shuhns) are complex societies. They have cities, organized governments, art, religion, class divisions, and a writing system.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why Were River Valleys Important?

The first civilizations arose in river valleys because good farming conditions made it easy to feed large numbers of people. The rivers also made it easy to get from one place to another and to trade. Trade provided a way for goods and ideas to move from place to place. It was no accident, then, that cities grew up in these valleys and became the centers of civilizations.

As cities took shape, so did the need for organization. Someone had to make plans and decisions about matters of common concern. People formed governments to do just that. Their leaders took charge of food supplies and building projects. They made laws to keep order and assembled armies to fend off enemies.

With fewer worries about meeting their basic needs, people in the river valleys had more time to think about other things. They developed religions and the arts. To pass on information, they invented ways of writing. They also created calendars to tell time.

Early civilizations shared another feature— they had a class structure. That is, people held different places in society depending on what work they did and how much wealth or power they had.

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The Rise of Sumer

The earliest-known civilization arose in what is now southern Iraq, on a flat plain bounded by the **Tigris River** (TY • gruhs) and the **Euphrates River** (yu•FRAY• teez). This area was called **Mesopotamia** (MEH• suh • puh • TAY • mee • uh), which is Greek for “the land between the rivers.” Mesopotamia lay in the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent, a curving strip of land that extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf.

Mesopotamia had a hot, dry climate. In the spring, the rivers often flooded, leaving behind rich soil for farming. The problem was that the flooding was very unpredictable. It might flood one year, but not the next. Every year, farmers worried about their crops. They came to believe they needed their gods to bless their efforts.

Over time, the farmers learned to build dams and channels to control the seasonal floods. They also built walls, waterways, and ditches to bring water to their fields. This way of watering crops is called **irrigation** (IHR • uh • GAY • shuhn). Irrigation allowed the farmers to grow plenty of food and support a large population. By 3000 B.C., many cities had formed in southern Mesopotamia in a region known as **Sumer** (SOO•muhr).

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What Were City-States?

Sumerian cities were isolated from each other by geography. Beyond the areas of settlement lay mudflats and patches of scorching desert. This terrain made travel and communication difficult. Each Sumerian city and the land around it became a separate **city-state.** It had its own government and was not part of any larger unit.

Sumerian city-states often went to war with one another. They fought to gain glory and to control more territory. For protection, each city-state surrounded itself with a wall. Because stone and wood were in short supply, the Sumerians used river mud as their main building material. They mixed the mud with crushed reeds, formed bricks, and left them in the sun to dry. The hard waterproof bricks were used for walls, as well as homes, temples, and other buildings.

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Gods and Rulers

The Sumerians believed in many gods. Each was thought to have power over a natural force or a human activity—flooding, for example, or basket weaving. The Sumerians tried hard to please the gods. They built a grand temple called a ziggurat (ZIH • guh• RAT) to the chief god. The word *ziggurat* means “mountain of god” or “hill of heaven.”

With tiers like a giant square wedding cake, the ziggurat dominated the city. At the top was a shrine, or special place of worship that only priests and priestesses could enter. The priests and priestesses were powerful and controlled much of the land. They may even have ruled at one time.

Later, kings ran the government. They led armies and organized building projects. The first kings were probably war heroes. Their position became hereditary. That is, after a king died, his son took over.

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What Was Life Like in Sumer?

While Sumerian kings lived in large palaces, ordinary people lived in small mud-brick houses. Most people in Sumer farmed. Some, however, were **artisans** (AHR• tuh • zuhns), or

skilled workers who made metal products, cloth, or pottery. Other people in Sumer worked as merchants or traders. They traveled to other cities and towns and traded tools, wheat, and barley for copper, tin, and timber—things that Sumer did not have.

People in Sumer were divided into three social classes. The upper class included kings, priests, and government officials. In the middle class were artisans, merchants, farmers, and fishers. These people made up the largest group. The lower class were enslaved people who worked on farms or in the temples.

Enslaved people were forced to serve others. Slaveholders thought of them as property.

Some slaves were prisoners of war. Others were criminals. Still others were enslaved because they had to pay off their debts. In Sumer, women and men had separate roles. Men headed the households. Only males could go to school. Women, however, did have rights. They could buy and sell property and run businesses.

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1. The civilizations arose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because the conditions for farming were good.

 A. in the mountains C. in river valleys

 B. near the sea D. in the desert

2. The Sumerians built a temple called a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to honor their chief god.

 A. scribe C. Gilgamesh

 B. cradle D. ziggurat

3. Although most Sumerians were farmers, many were skilled \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who also made metal, cloth, and pottery products.

 A. artisans C. slaves

 B. merchants D. priests

4. How did Mesopotamians control the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is a civilization?

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A Skilled People

The Sumerians left a lasting mark onworld history. Their ideas and inventions were copied and improved upon by other peoples. As a result, Mesopotamia has been called the “cradle of civilization.”

Why Was Writing Important?

The people of Sumer created many things that still affect our lives today. Probably their greatest invention was writing. Writing is important because it helps people keep records and pass on their ideas to others.

People in Sumer developed writing to keep track of business deals and other events. Their writing was called **cuneiform** (kyoo • NEE • uh • FAWRM). It consisted of hundreds of wedgeshaped marks cut into damp clay tablets with a sharp-ended reed. Archaeologists have found thousands of these cuneiform tablets, telling us much about Mesopotamian life.

Only a few people—mostly boys from wealthy families—learned how to write. After years of training, they became **scribes** (SKRYBS), or record keepers. Scribes held honored positions in society, often going on to become judges and political leaders.

Sumerian Literature

The Sumerians also produced works of literature. The world’s oldest known story comes from Sumer. It is called the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (GIHL • guh • MEHSH). An epic is a long poem that tells the story of a hero. The hero Gilgamesh is a king who travels around the world with a friend and performs great deeds. When his friend dies, Gilgamesh searches for a way to live forever. He learns that this is possible only for the gods.

Advances in Science and Math

The Mesopotamians’ creativity extended to technology too. You read earlier about

Sumerian irrigation systems. Sumerians also invented the wagon wheel to help carry people and goods from place to place. Another breakthrough was the plow, which made farming easier. Still another invention was the sailboat, which replaced muscle power with wind power.

Sumerians developed many mathematical ideas. They used geometry to measure fields and put up buildings. They also created a number system based on 60. We have them to thank for our 60-minute hour, 60-second minute, and 360-degree circle.

In addition, Sumerian people watched the skies to learn the best times to plant crops and to hold religious festivals. They recorded the positions of the planets and stars and developed a 12-month calendar based on the cycles of the moon.

1. The few Sumerians who learned how to write often became \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, holding high positions in society.

 A. artisans C. head of households

 B. scribes D. merchants

2. What kind of written language did the Sumerians use?

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Sargon and Hammurabi

Over time, conflicts weakened Sumer’scity-states. They became vulnerable to attacks by outside groups such as the Akkadians (uh•KAY• dee • uhnz) of northern Mesopotamia.

The king of the Akkadians was named **Sargon** (SAHR • GAHN). In about 2340 B.C., Sargon conquered all of Mesopotamia. He set up the world’s first empire. An **empire** (EHM• PYR) is a group of many different lands under one ruler. Sargon’s empire lasted for more than 200 years before falling to invaders.

In the 1800s B.C., a new group of people became powerful in Mesopotamia. They built the city of **Babylon** (BA• buh• luhn) by the Euphrates River. It quickly became a center of trade. Beginning in 1792 B.C., the Babylonian king, **Hammurabi** (HA•muh•RAH• bee), began conquering cities to the north and south and created the Babylonian Empire.

Hammurabi is best known for his law code, or collection of laws. (See pages 24 and 25.) He took what he believed were the best laws from each city-state and put them in one code. The code covered crimes, farming and business activities, and marriage and the family—almost every area of life. Although many punishments in the Code of Hammurabi were cruel, his laws mark an important step toward a fair system of justice.

1. The Babylonian king Hammurabi is best known for his

 A. scientific inventions. C. law code.

 B. mathematical ideas. D. writing skills.

2. Who was the king of the Akkadians who conquered all of Mesopotamia?

 A. Paul C. Gilgamesh

 B. Sargon D. Hammurabi

3. Why was Sargon’s empire important?

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SECTION THREE

The Assyrians

About 1,000 years after Hammurabi, a new empire arose in Mesopotamia. It was founded by a people called the Assyrians (uh •SIHR•ee •uhns), who lived in the north near the Tigris River. **Assyria** (uh•SIHR•ee• uh) had fertile valleys that attracted outside invaders. To defend their land, the Assyrians built a large army. Around 900 B.C., they began taking over the rest of Mesopotamia.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Why Were the Assyrians So Strong?

The Assyrian army was well organized. At its core were groups of foot soldiers armed with spears and daggers. Other soldiers were experts at using bows and arrows. The army also had chariot riders and soldiers who fought on horseback.

This fearsome and mighty force was the first large army to use iron weapons. For centuries, iron had been used for tools, but it was too soft to serve as a material for weapons. Then a people called the Hittites (HIH• TYTZ), who lived northwest of Assyria, developed a way of making iron stronger. They heated iron ore, hammered it, and rapidly cooled it. The Assyrians learned this technique from the Hittites. They produced iron weapons that were stronger than those made of copper or tin.

The Assyrians were ferocious warriors. To attack cities, they tunneled under walls or climbed over them on ladders. They loaded tree trunks onto movable platforms and used them as battering rams to knock down city gates. Once a city was captured, the Assyrians set fire to its buildings. They also carried away its people and goods.

Anyone who resisted Assyrian rule was punished. The Assyrians drove people from their lands and moved them into foreign territory. Then they brought in new settlers and forced them to pay heavy taxes.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A Well-Organized Government

Assyrian kings had to be strong to rule their large empire. By about 650 B.C., the empire stretched from the **Persian Gulf** (PUHR•zhuhn) in theeast to Egypt’s Nile River in the west. The capital was at **Nineveh** (NIH•nuh •vuh) on the Tigris River.

Assyrian kings divided the empire into **provinces** (PRAH • vuhn • suhs), or political districts. They chose officials to govern each province. These officials collected taxes and enforced the king’s laws.

Assyrian kings built roads to join all parts of their empire. Government soldiers were posted at stations along the way to protect traders from bandits. Messengers on government business used the stations to rest and change horses.

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Life in Assyria

The Assyrians lived much like other Mesopotamians. Their writing was based on Babylonian writing, and they worshiped many of the same gods. Their laws were similar, but lawbreakers often faced more brutal and cruel punishments in Assyria.

As builders, the Assyrians showed great skill. They erected large temples and palaces that they filled with wall carvings and statues. The Assyrians also produced and collected literature. One of the world’s first libraries was in Nineveh. It held 25,000 tablets of stories and songs to the gods. Modern historians have learned much about ancient civilizations from this library.

Assyria’s cruel treatment of people led to many rebellions. About 650 B.C., the Assyrians began fighting each other over who would be their next king. A group of people called the Chaldeans (kahl • DEE • uhns) seized the opportunity to rebel. They captured Nineveh in 612 B.C., and the Assyrian Empire soon crumbled.

GIST NOTE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did the Hittites teach the Assyrians that helped make its army strong?

 A. how to use bows and arrows C. how to make iron stonger

 B. how to ride horses D. how to make chariots

2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Babylon are known as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

 A. Hanging Gardens C. wall around the city

 B. king’s palace D. irrigation system

3. Why were the Assyrian soldiers considered brutal and cruel?

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4. Why was the Assyrian army a powerful fighting force?

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The Chaldeans

The Chaldeans wanted to build an empire. Led by King **Nebuchadnezzar** (NEH• byuh•kuhd•NEH•zuhr), they controlled all of Mesopotamia from 605 B.C. to 562 B.C.

The City of Babylon

Most of the Chaldeans were descendants of the Babylonian people who made up Hammurabi’s empire about 1,200 years earlier. They rebuilt the city of Babylon as the glorious center of their empire.

Babylon quickly became the world’s largest and richest city. It was surrounded by a brick wall so wide that two chariots could pass on the road on top. Built into the wall at 100-yard (91.4-m) intervals were towers where soldiers kept watch.

Large palaces and temples stood in the city’s center. A huge ziggurat reached more than 300 feet (91.4 m) into the sky. Another marvel, visible from any point in Babylon, was an immense staircase of greenery: the **Hanging Gardens** at the king’s palace.

These terraced gardens showcased large trees, masses of flowering vines, and other beautiful plants. A pump brought in water from a nearby river. Nebuchadnezzar built

the gardens to please his wife, who missed the mountains and plants of her homeland in the northwest.

 One Greek historian in the 400s B.C. described the beauty of Babylon. He wrote, “In magnificence, there is no other city that approaches it.” Outside the center of Babylon stood houses and marketplaces. There, artisans made pottery, cloth, baskets, and jewelry. They sold their wares to passing **caravans** (KAR • uh • VANZ), or groups of traveling merchants. Because Babylon was located on the major trade route betweenthe Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean

Sea, it became rich from trade.

Babylon was also a center of science. Like earlier people in Mesopotamia, the Chaldeans believed that changes in the sky revealed the plans of the gods. Their **astronomers**

(uh •STRAH• nuh •muhrs)—people who study the heavenly bodies— mapped the stars, the planets, and the phases of the moon. The Chaldeans made one of the first sundials and were the first to have a seven-day week.

Why Did the Empire Fall?

As time passed, the Chaldeans began to lose their power. They found it hard to control the peoples they had conquered. In 539 B.C. Persians from the mountains to the northeast captured Babylon. Mesopotamia became part of the new Persian Empire.

1. The Chaldeans contributed the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to our modern-day calendar.

 A. major holidays C. twelve-month calendar

 B. seven-day week D. weekend

2. Which mountain people captured Babylon in 539 B.C.?

 A. the Hittites C. the Chaldeans

 B. the Persians D. the Assyrians

3. What were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. What were some of the accomplishments of Chaldean astronomers?

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