

Mesopotamia: Land between
the rivers (Tigris and
Euphrates)

Cuneiform: Sumerian writing
system using wedge-shaped
marks on clay tablets

Barter System: Trading goods
directly for other goods
without using money

Levees: Barriers built to
stop floods and control
rivers

Irrigation: Ditches built to bring
water to crops during dry
times

Ziggurat: Huge, layered temple
in the center of each Sumerian
city

Stylus: Tool used to press
wedge-shaped marks into
clay

Empire: A large area
ruled by one leader

Important People

Sargon the Great

- Powerful king who ruled Akkad around 2300 BC, created the Akkadian Empire

Geography & Environment

- Mesopotamia means "land between the rivers"
- Located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
- Rivers flooded each year and left behind rich, fertile soil
- Sumerians built levees to stop floods and irrigation ditches for dry times

Sumerian Inventions

- The Wheel: Made transportation easier
- The Plow: Helped farmers farm faster
- Cuneiform Writing: Used wedge-shaped marks on clay tablets with a stylus

Sumerian Society the Social Hierarchy

- Kings and Queens: Ruled the cities (top of society)
- Priests: Managed religious temples and rituals
- Workers and Farmers: The majority - farmers grew food, workers crafted tools and pottery
- Slaves: Had little or no personal freedom, worked in homes or fields

Jobs in Sumer

- Farmers: Grew food like barley, wheat, and dates for the city
- Scribes: Kept records of trades and harvests on clay tablets
- Merchants: Traded goods with other cities
- Craftspeople: Made tools, pottery, and cloth
- Priests: Offered food and gifts to gods at ziggurats

Religion

- Each city-state had its own main god
- Built ziggurats as religious centers
- Only priests were allowed inside the top of ziggurats

Economy & Trade

- Used barter system (trading goods directly for other goods) Sometimes used silver as payment
- Transported goods mainly by boats along rivers and seas
- Traded food, cloth, pottery, metal tools
- Clay tablets recorded trades and debts

Akkadian Empire

- Created by Sargon the Great around 2300 BC
- Lasted about 200 years
- One of the first big empires in history
- Covered much of the Middle East
- Helped spread ideas and culture
- United many different peoples under one