**Ancient Mesopotamia Notes**

Sumerians

Invented the Wheel

Writing

Divided time in minutes/seconds

Opened first trade routes (across deserts)

In Greek “Country between two rivers”

**Valley: A low area of land between hills or mountains, typically with a river or stream flowing through it.**

**Delta: A triangular tract of sediment deposited at the mouth of a river**

**Plain: A large area of flat land with few trees**

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Mesopotamia is mentioned in the Old Testament (Genesis 2:10-15)

Lays between Tigris and Euphrates

The rivers not only brought life to the people who settled in the delta, but also provided a key transportation route

The rivers carry large amounts of silt from the high mountains from where their water source originates

Rivers brought life but also unpredictable floods and destruction

What made it possible for Sumerians to succeed and thrive?

 Wheat grows wild along the banks of the river and provided a constant food source, which allowed people to settle and not need to gather and hunt

Became some of the world’s first farmers

 Irrigation technology permitted the Sumerians to turn the power of nature to their own use

 Keeping livestock, harvested wheat, barley and millet

 Farming allowed for a year round year supply and people began to settle along the banks of the river.

 Trades become common (Carpentry, Pottery, Weaving and Metalwork.)

 The growth helps create a thriving **economy** (the community’s wealth and resources.)

 The region becomes a centre of trade.

 Trade is done along the river ways using reed boats with Goatskin sails.

 Trade brought new goods, but also knowledge about new languages, religions and inventions.

 **Scribes:** people who sell their writing skills. They help keep records & accounts on a clay tablet.

 **Shekel:** a silver, copper or gold coin that weighed the same as 180 grains of barley.

 **Mina:** worth 60 Shekels

 **Talent:** worth 60 Minas

 **Barter System:** a form of trade where goods were exchanged for their value in sacks of grain.

 **Chronologies:** list important events in the order they happened.

**CHRONOLOGY OF MESOPOTAMIAN EMPIRES:**

**6000 BCE:** Herders & Farmers begin to settle in the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys.

**3500 BCE:** Irrigation and the increase in trade leads to the creation of cities and the **Sumerian civilization.**

**3000 BCE:**  Under the rule of kings, city-states are established. Trade continues to grow in the region.

**2300 BCE**: The **Akkadians** overpower the Sumerians and unite the region into the first Mesopotamian Empire.

**2135 BCE:** The **Sumerians** regain control in the region.

**1792 – 1595 BCE: Babylonians** gains control, until it is conquered by the **Hittites**.

**1595 – 1157 BCE:** Chaotic age lasts for centuries, Kingdoms rise and fall.

**883 – 612 BCE:** **Assyrians** gain control in the region, controlling lands as far away as Egypt.

**612 – 539 BCE:** The **Chaldeans** defeat the **Assyrians**. A new Babylonian Empire emerges.

**539 BCE – 637 CE**: **Persian Empire** capture Babylon, and rule for over 1000 years.

 **Mesopotamian Innovations** include: The wheel / Sailing Ships / Writing / Irrigation / Law / Architecture

 **The Wheel:** allowed for easier transportation of goods in wagon and chariots during war. Also helped great pulleys to raise water from wells and potter’s wheels for creating pottery.

 **Farming Technology:** They harnessed animals to help with ploughing and irrigation. Created shoulder yokes for cattle. Improved ploughs for digging, turning soil and dispersing seeds.

 **Astronomy:** Created the 12 month calendar based on cycles of the moon. Divided the year into seasons.

 **Mathematics:** To help with building, to help keep accurate records, calculate taxes. Their counting system was based on the #60. (Still used with time.)

 **Writing:** First to have a written language, called cuneiform. Wrote on clay tablets.

 **Laws:** Created laws to help govern people. **Hammurabi’s Code** (most famous set of laws) had 282 laws that covered all aspects of life. Every offence had a punishment.