

CHAPTER  
**2**

# Mesopotamia

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

# How does geography influence the way people live?

Think about how this question might relate to the Sumerian city-states.



### TALK ABOUT IT

Discuss with a partner what type of information you would need to answer this question. For example, one question might be: Why did the geography of Mesopotamia encourage rivalries among the Sumerian city-states?

**DIRECTIONS:** Now write down three additional questions that would help you explain why the Sumerian cities became self-ruling, independent groups.

### MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

*Supporting Question 1:*

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*Supporting Question 2:*

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*Supporting Question 3:*

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**ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

As you gather evidence to answer the Essential Question, think about:

- the location of the first settlements between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers.
- the Fertile Crescent, which is an area of rich farmland between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf.

**My Notes**

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# The Sumerians

**DIRECTIONS:** Search for evidence in Chapter 2, Lesson 1 to help you answer the following questions.

**1A IDENTIFYING CAUSE AND EFFECT** How did Mesopotamia’s geography attract settlements?

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**1B ANALYZING** What water supply challenges were faced by people who settled near rivers in Mesopotamia?

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**2 GEOGRAPHY** How did the geography of Mesopotamia contribute to Sumerian cities becoming independent city-states?

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- 3 IDENTIFYING CAUSE AND EFFECT** Fill in the chart below to describe how the seasons affected the settlers' source of water. Describe how settlers responded to the changes.

Seasonal Changes in Water Supplies	People's Responses Over Time
SUMMER	
SPRING	

- 4 ECONOMICS** Use the chart below to record the details of the effects of irrigation.

Some Results of Using Irrigation

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

# An Early Chariot

**DIRECTIONS:** Examine the artifact below and answer the accompanying questions.

**EXPLORE THE CONTEXT:** The invention of the wheel changed the lives of Sumerians in important ways, such as transportation. This Sumerian artifact from around 2500 B.C.E. shows a wheeled chariot. Chariots were a form of transportation used by the Sumerians. A chariot driver stood above the axle and gripped his legs around a wooden centerpiece, which was often covered with fleece for comfort.

**PRIMARY SOURCE: ARTIFACT**

**1 DESCRIBING** Describe the mode of transportation shown and how it provided something more than a cart did. How do you think the drivers directed the donkeys or horses? What main advantage would chariot drivers have over cart users?

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**2 ANALYZING** Who do you think would be the most likely users of chariots in Mesopotamia? Explain why you think so.

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**3 COMPARING** Does your analysis agree with the text description of the chariot's development and usage?

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**4 HISTORY** How do you believe the invention of the chariot affected the culture at that time?

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## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

# Sumerian Tools

**DIRECTIONS:** Study the following image and answer the accompanying questions.

**EXPLORE THE CONTEXT:** This image shows early Sumerian tools from around 2000 B.C.E. The Sumerians were the first people to put copper and tin together to make a beautiful and strong metal called bronze. Before they discovered bronze, some tools were made of clay.

## PRIMARY SOURCE: ARTIFACTS



- 1 DESCRIBING** Do you recognize the tools in the images? How do you think these tools were used?

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**2 HISTORY** In what ways do you think life changed for the Sumerians after these tools were created?

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**3 ANALYZING TEXT EVIDENCE** After referring to the text, describe what you know about the technology of toolmaking in Mesopotamia. What led to an improvement in tool making?

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**4 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How do you think geography influenced the development of these tools?

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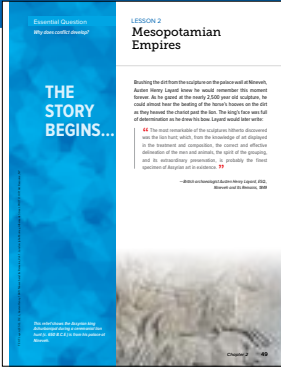
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# Mesopotamian Empires

**DIRECTIONS:** Search for evidence in Chapter 2, Lesson 2 to help you answer the following questions.

**1 HISTORY** Use the chart to identify some results of the spread of empires in Mesopotamia.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

As you gather evidence to answer the Essential Question, think about:

- why the rulers desired more land.
- how empires developed through conquest.

## My Notes

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Results of Empire Building



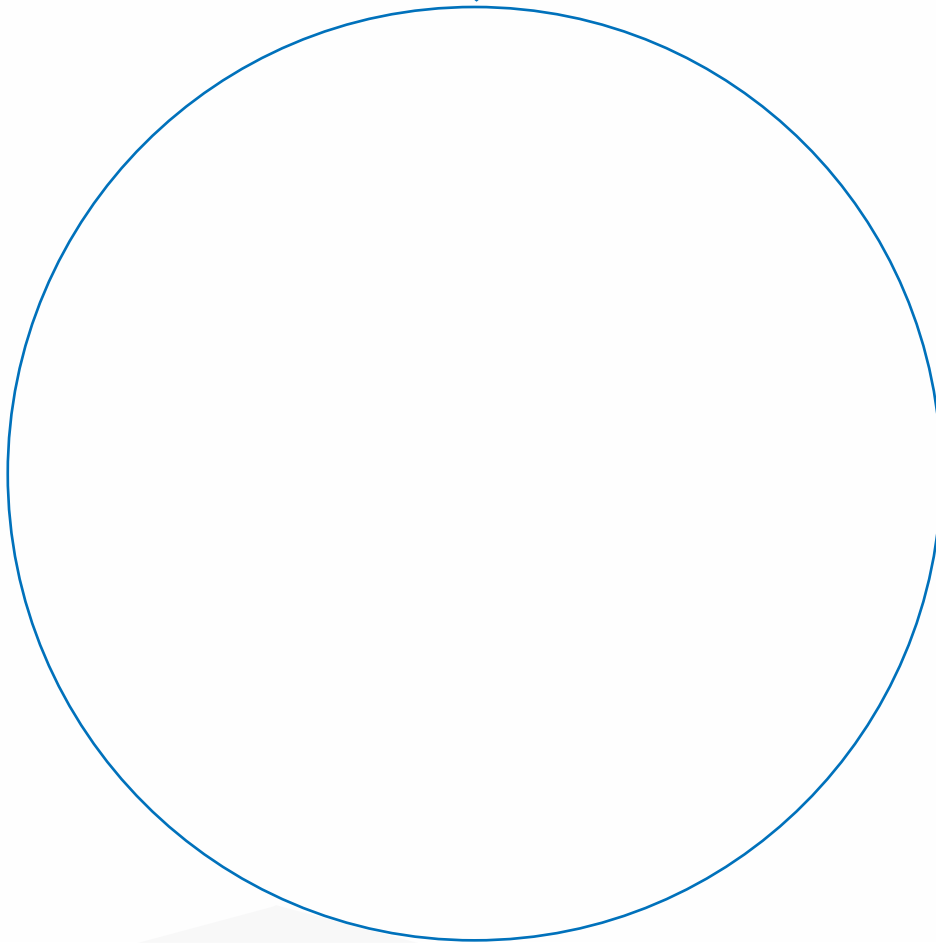
**2 INTERPRETING** Consider how the government of the Assyrian Empire was able to rule such a large area of land. What allowed for such an expansion of power?

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**3 CITING TEXT EVIDENCE** Use the graphic organizer to cite reasons for the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

The Fall of the Assyrian Empire



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*

# Assyrians at War

**DIRECTIONS:** Examine the following image and answer the accompanying questions.

**EXPLORE THE CONTEXT:** A relief is a carving on a wall. The relief below is from Assyria's Central Palace, built around 728 B.C.E. This relief sculpture illustrates some early techniques and weapons that the Assyrians used to capture a city.

**PRIMARY SOURCE: RELIEF SCULPTURE**



- 1 ANALYZING** How are the soldiers depicted in the image? What actions are they taking to conquer the city?

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**2 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** Why do you think cities were surrounded by tall walls with watchtowers? How would enemy soldiers get into the cities to conquer them?

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**3 COMPARING AND CONTRASTING** Compare and contrast the text information describing the Assyrian army's weapons and actions with the image. How are the two alike and different?

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**4 HISTORY** How did the attacks of the city-states change the lives of the conquered citizens? What were some of the effects after a new ruler was in charge?

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## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How does geography influence the way people live?*



# Herodotus on Babylon

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the following excerpt and answer the accompanying questions.

**EXPLORE THE CONTEXT:** Herodotus was an early Greek historian who traveled and described the actions and sights he witnessed. This excerpt gives us a view of the defense system of the great city of Babylon.

## PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPT FROM HERODOTUS 1:181: GREEK REPORTS OF BABYLONIA, CHALDEA, AND ASSYRIA

“1.181: The outer wall is the main defense of the city. There is, however, a second inner wall, of less thickness than the first, but very little inferior to it in strength. The center of each division of the town was occupied by a fortress. In the one stood the palace of the kings, surrounded by a wall of great strength and size; in the other was the sacred precinct of Jupiter Belus [Bel], a square enclosure two furlongs each way, with gates of solid brass; which was also remaining in my time. In the middle of the precinct there was a tower of solid masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, upon which was raised a second tower, and on that a third, and so on up to eight. The ascent to the top is on the outside, by a path which winds round all the towers. When one is about halfway up, one finds a resting place and seats, where persons are wont to sit some time on their way to the summit. On the topmost tower there is a spacious temple, and inside the temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned [decorated], with a golden table by its side. There is no statue of any kind set up in the place, nor is the chamber occupied of nights by any one but a single native woman, who, as the Chaldaeans, the priests of this god, affirm, is chosen for himself by the deity out of all the women of the land.”

— Herodotus, *Histories*, c. 430 B.C.E.

### VOCABULARY

*precinct:* a district or area

*Jupiter Belus:* a reference to the Akkadian God Bel

*enclosure:* an area shut in by walls or fences

*furlong:* a distance of approximately one-eighth of a mile, or 220 yards

*masonry:* something built with bricks or stones

*breadth:* width

*wont:* a habit or something a person is used to doing

*chamber:* a private room

**1 CITING TEXT EVIDENCE** According to Herodotus, which areas inside the city's walls received the most protection?

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**2 DETERMINING MEANING** Examine the location of the temple room as described by Herodotus. Why would the location of the temple be important for Herodotus to describe in such detail?

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**3 CITING TEXT EVIDENCE** Which words did Herodotus use to describe how the city was protected against intruders? Underline the words he used.

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**4 HISTORY** Whose point of view does Herodotus use to explain the presence of the lady in the temple room?

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ESSENTIAL QUESTION  
*How does geography influence the way people live?*

**1 Think About It**

Review the Supporting Questions that you developed at the beginning of the chapter. Review the evidence that you gathered in Chapter 2. Were you able to answer each Supporting Question?

If there was not enough evidence to answer your Supporting Questions, what additional evidence do you think you need?

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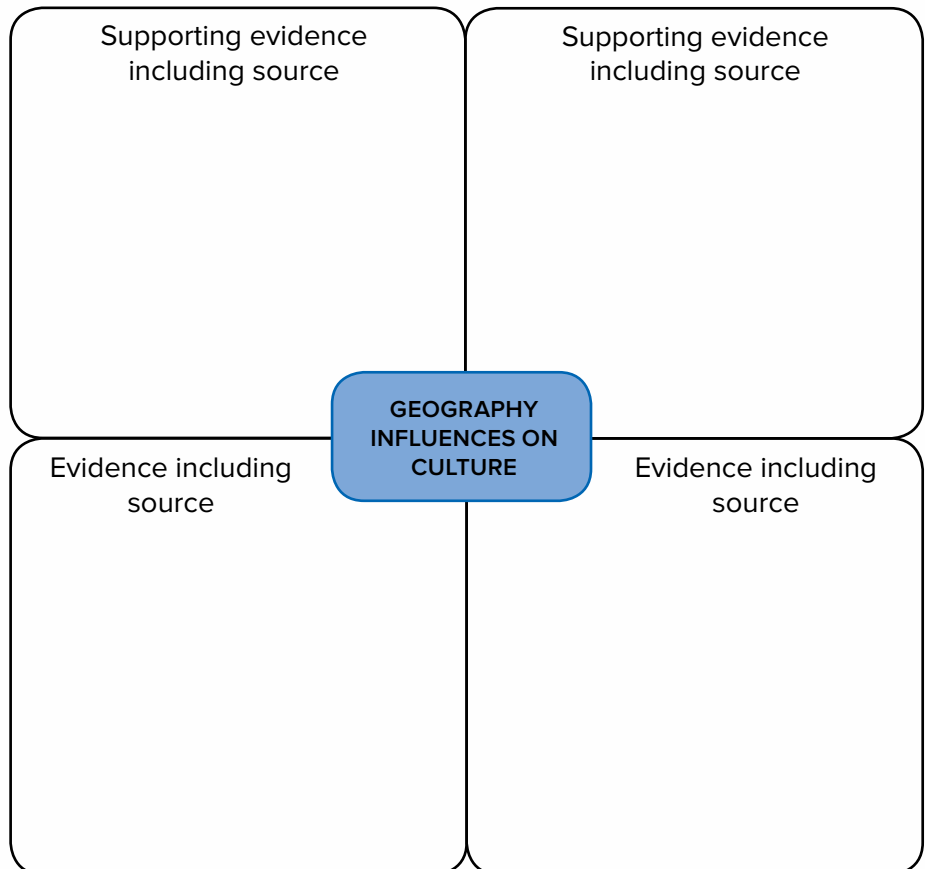
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**2 Organize Your Evidence**

Use the graphic organizer below to organize the evidence you will use to support your Position Statement.



### 3 Write About It

A position statement related to the Essential Question should reflect your conclusion about the evidence. Write a Position Statement for the ESSENTIAL QUESTION: *How does geography influence the way people live?*

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### 4 Connect to the Essential Question

On a separate piece of paper, create at least five good interview questions as if you were interviewing a person who lived in the Mesopotamian valley in one of the early Sumerian city-states. Think about asking why he or she settled where they did, what the advantages and disadvantages were, how they needed to adapt to the environment, etc.

After deciding what questions to ask, and using the Essential Question about geography's influence as your central idea, write how an early Sumerian might have answered your questions.

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