Bell Ringer

**Background Information**

From the early colonists’ establishments on the James River in Virginia to Lewis and Clark’s travels on the Missouri River, Americans have depended on rivers for transportation, trade, and resources.

**Question**

What role have rivers played in the development of American cities and towns? Has a river been an important geographical feature in your area? In what way?
UNIT 5
Ancient River Valley Civilizations

Sumerian Civilization

Egyptian Civilization

Harappan Civilization

Ancient China Civilization
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline:  (See your Packet, p. 12)

4 early River Valley Civilizations

- Sumerian Civilization - Tigris & Euphrates Rivers (Mesopotamia)
  - Egyptian Civilization - Nile River
  - Harappan Civilization - Indus River
  - Ancient China - Huang He (Yellow) River
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline:

“The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

- Sumerian Civilization - Tigris & Euphrates Rivers (Mesopotamia)

**City-States in Mesopotamia**
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

City-States in Mesopotamia

I. GEOGRAPHY
   A. Mostly dry desert climate in SW Asia (Middle East)
      1. Except in region between Tigris / Euphrates rivers.

      2. a flat plain known as Mesopotamia lies between the two rivers.

      3. Because of this region’s shape and the richness of its soil, it is called the Fertile Crescent.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

City-States in Mesopotamia

I. GEOGRAPHY

3. Because of this region’s shape and the richness of its soil, it is called the Fertile Crescent.
   - the rivers flood at least once a year, leaving a thick bed of mud called silt.

Sumerians were first to settle in this region, attracted by the rich soil.

B. Three Disadvantages / Environmental Challenges
1. Unpredictable flooding / dry summer months
2. No natural barriers for protection - small villages lying in open plain were defenseless.
3. Limited natural resources - stone, wood, metal.
The Ziggurat at Ur was first excavated by British archaeologist Woolley in 1923. The Iraqi Directorate of Antiquities restored its lower stages in the 1980s.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

City-States in Mesopotamia

II. The City-State Structure of Government

A. Although all the cities shared the same culture …
B. each city had its own government / rulers, warriors, it’s own patron god. and functioned like an independent country
C. includes within the city walls and also the surrounding farm land
D. Examples include Sumerian cities of Ur, Uruk, Kish, Lagesh
E. At center of each city was the walled temple with a ziggurat – a massive, tiered, pyramid-shaped structure.
F. Powerful priests held much political power in the beginning.

Define type of government
III. SUMERIAN CULTURE

A. RELIGION

1. Belief in many gods - polytheism
   God of the clouds / air was Enlil – the most powerful god.
   (Nearly 3,000 others – with human qualities.
   The Sumerians viewed their gods as hostile and unpredictable –
   similar to the natural environment around them.)

Reflection Time:

How does what’s happening to people at any given moment affect how they think about their God(s)?
III. SUMERIAN CULTURE

A. RELIGION

1. Belief in many gods - polytheism
   God of the clouds / air was Enlil – the most powerful god.
   (Nearly 3,000 others – with human qualities.
   They were viewed as often hostile and unpredictable – similar to the
   natural environment around them.)

2. Gilgamesh Epic, one of the earliest works of literature.
   Contains a “flood story” that predates the Hebrew Old Testament story of
   Noah by at least 2,000 years.
III. SUMERIAN CULTURE

B. SOCIETY

1. Three social classes
   a. Priests and royalty (kings)
   b. Wealthy merchants
   c. Ordinary workers
   [Slaves]—were not free citizens and thus not included in class system.

2. Women
   a. Had more rights than in many later civilizations
      (could own property, join lower ranks of priesthood)
   b. But not allowed to attend schools
      (could not read or write)
City-States in Mesopotamia

III. SUMERIAN CULTURE

C. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1. One of the first writing systems - Cuneiform
2. Invented wheel, the sail, the plow
3. First to use bronze.

Other Sumerian Achievements
(see textbook p. 31)

• one of the earliest sketched maps

• astronomy

• a number system in base 60 from which stems our modern units of measuring time and the 360 degrees of a circle.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

City-States in Mesopotamia

IV. First EMPIRE Builders

A. 3,000 – 2,000 B.C.E. the City-States began to war with each other. These internal struggles meant they were too weak to ward off an attack by an outside enemy.

B. Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2,350 B.C.E.)

1. Took control of the region, creating world’s first empire - when several peoples, nations, or previously independent states are placed under the control of one ruler.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

City-States in Mesopotamia

C. Babylonian Empire
   1. Overtook Sumerians around 2,000 B.C.
   2. Built capital, Babylon, on Euphrates river
C. Babylonian Empire
   1. Overtook Sumerians around 2,000 B.C.E.
   2. Built capital, Babylon, on Euphrates river
   3. Reign of Hammurabi [1792-1750 B.C.E.]
3. Reign of Hammurabi
   a. Famous Code of Law

- he wisely took all the laws of the region's city-states and unified them into one code. This helped unify the region.

Engraved in stone, erected all over the empire.

And why do you think he believed it important to place the laws in prominent locations so the people could visibly see them?

A total of 282 laws are etched on this 7 ft. 5 in. tall black basalt pillar (stele). The top portion, shown here, depicts Hammurabi with Shamash, the sun god. Shamash is presenting to Hammurabi a staff and ring, which symbolize the power to administer the law. Although Hammurabi's Code is not the first code of laws (the first records date four centuries earlier), it is the best preserved legal document reflecting the social structure of Babylon during Hammurabi's rule. This amazing find was discovered in 1901 and today is in the famous Louvre Museum in Paris, France.
3. Babylonian Reign of Hammurabi
   a. Famous Code of Law

• He wisely took all the laws of the region’s city-states and unified them into one code. This helped unify the region.
• Engraved in stone, erected all over the empire.
• Strict in nature – “the punishment fits the crime” / “eye for an eye” Such laws were adopted by neighbors – many similar found in Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament)
• His act set an important precedent – idea that the government was responsible for what occurred in society.

A total of 282 laws are etched on this 7 ft. 5 in. tall black basalt pillar (stele). The top portion, shown here, depicts Hammurabi with Shamash, the sun god. Shamash is presenting to Hammurabi a staff and ring, which symbolize the power to administer the law. Although Hammurabi’s Code is not the first code of laws (the first records date four centuries earlier), it is the best preserved legal document reflecting the social structure of Babylon during Hammurabi’s rule. This amazing find was discovered in 1901 and today is in the famous Louvre Museum in Paris, France.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline:  
(See your Packet, p. 15)

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“The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

- Sumerian Civilization - Tigris & Euphrates Rivers (Mesopotamia)
- Egyptian Civilization - Nile River
Examine this quote:

What do you infer from this quote, what did Herodotus mean by it?
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

**Egypt on the Nile**

I. **GEOGRAPHY**

B. Upper and Lower Egypt

1. Most of Egypt’s history focused around **Lower Egypt**, around the Nile delta which flows into the Mediterranean Sea.
2. **Upper Egypt** developed later upstream
3. Nile provided reliable transportation - to go north, drift with the current toward the sea - to go south, sail catching the Mediterranean breeze

C. Environment

1. Unlike Mesopotamia, the Nile was predictable
2. **Deserts** on both sides of Nile - provided natural protection against invaders - also reduced interaction with other people

Egypt would develop mostly in isolation and therefore, a culture that was quite unique.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

**Egypt on the Nile**

II. UNITED EGYPT’S GOVERNMENT

A. Unlike Sumerian, no independent city-states in Egypt

B. *Menes*, the king of Upper Egypt,
   1. united the two regions – Upper and Lower – in 3,100 B.C.E.
   2. Capital: Memphis
   3. Creates first Egyptian dynasty

C. The **Pharaoh** [means, royal house] – the ruler of Egypt

1. were considered gods; served both political and religious roles

   Type of government where the political rulers are thought to be divinely-guided, or even divine themselves is a **theocracy**.

Before 3000 B.C., there was the white crown of Upper Egypt and the red crown of Lower Egypt. When Egypt was united, these two crowns were combined into the Double Crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.
A modern-day Egyptian guide uses his Coleman lantern to illuminate the amazing hieroglyphic text covering the walls deep within the tunnels below the Saqqara pyramid.
An artist’s conception of the building of the great Khufu pyramid at Giza, Sphinx in foreground.
The Sphinx and Pyramid of Khafre at Giza.
III. EGYPTIAN CULTURE
   A. RELIGION
      1. Polytheistic
         Ra, Sun god; Horus, sky god; Isis, goddess of fertility (associated with Nile – mother “giver of life”)

B. Belief in afterlife!

The Funerary Scene
This scene depicts what occurs after a person has died, according to the ancient Egyptians.
The Egyptians had an elaborate and complex belief in the afterlife.
Chapter 2 Lecture Outline: “The Four Early River Valley Civilizations”

Egypt on the Nile

III. EGYPTIAN CULTURE

B. SOCIAL STRUCTURE

• Royal Family
• Upper class
  Landowners (also known as aristocracy or nobility)
  Priests
  Army commanders
  Government officials
• Middle Class
  (merchants / artisans)
• Lower class
  (peasant farmers, unskilled laborers)

Socially Mobile classes
Not “locked in”,
lower and middle classes
could rise up through marriage or
through merit (success).

A. Harvesting grain;  B. Musicians play for the workers in the fields;
C. Women winnowing the grain;  D. Scribes tally the farmer’s taxes;
E. The farmer’s son tending the livestock / cattle.