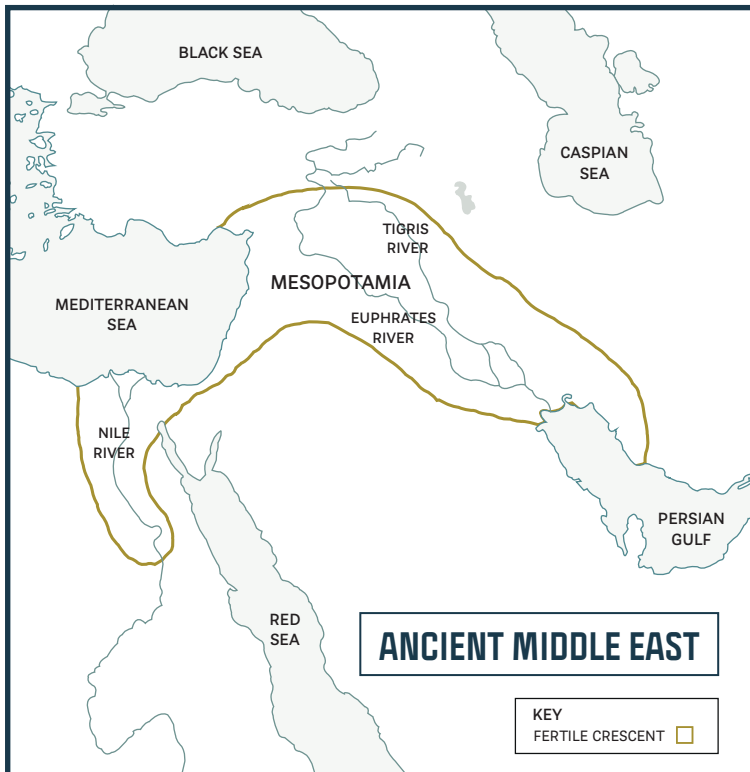


# Ancient Middle East Civilizations: Lasting Contributions



The people of the ancient Middle East built advanced societies. Their lasting contributions spread to neighboring areas and influenced future civilizations.



This map shows some key regions of the ancient Middle East.

The **Fertile Crescent** is a curved slice of land running from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. Several ancient civilizations developed in this slice of land because the fertile soil made it possible to grow crops there.

**Mesopotamia** is the Greek word for "between the rivers," and it refers to the land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. So, Mesopotamia is not the name of a civilization. It is a reference to an area within the Fertile Crescent where several early civilizations developed.

**Directions:** Read the list of contributions for each ancient Middle Eastern civilization. Then follow the instructions on page 4.

## Civilization: Sumer

**Location:** the southern part of Mesopotamia, now part of present-day Iraq

**Approximate Dates:**  
4500 BCE – 1900 BCE



Sumerian cuneiform






Ziggurat temple

## SUMERIAN CONTRIBUTIONS:

- Developed **cuneiform**, one of the first written languages
- Made improvements to farming, including using the wheel, plow, and irrigation systems
- Created a **number system based on 60**, which established the model for dividing an hour into 60 minutes and a circle into 360 degrees
- Developed transportation technology such as the sailboat and the chariot
- Wrote *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first surviving story about a human superhero
- Built **ziggurat** temples to honor their gods

# Ancient Middle East Civilizations: Lasting Contributions

**Keep going!** Read the list of contributions for each civilization. Then follow the instructions on page 4.

<p><b>Civilization: Babylon</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> based in the central-southern part of Mesopotamia, now part of present-day Iraq and Syria</p> <p><b>Approximate Dates:</b> 2000 BCE – 600 BCE</p>  <p><i>Hanging Gardens</i></p>	<p><b>BABYLONIAN CONTRIBUTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established <b>Hammurabi’s Code of Laws</b>, with clearly defined crimes and punishments (“an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”) <input type="text"/></li> <li>Built the <b>Hanging Gardens of Babylon</b>, one of the Seven Ancient Wonders, using water pumps and irrigation systems to support flowers and vegetation <input type="text"/></li> <li>Advanced mathematics and <b>astronomy</b>, studying comets, eclipses, and the position of stars <input type="text"/></li> <li>Calculated the length of a year within days <input type="text"/></li> </ul>
<p><b>Civilization: Assyria</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> the northern part of the Fertile Crescent, now parts of present-day Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey</p> <p><b>Approximate Dates:</b> 900 BCE – 600 BCE</p>  <p><i>Nineveh Library</i></p>	<p><b>ASSYRIAN CONTRIBUTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created an advanced army using <b>iron weapons</b> and a calvary <input type="text"/></li> <li>Built roads to allow armies to move more quickly <input type="text"/></li> <li>Built a <b>library</b> in their capital city, Nineveh, preserving and archiving over 22,000 Sumerian clay tablets written in cuneiform <input type="text"/></li> </ul>
<p><b>Civilization: Phoenicia</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> the western Mediterranean coast of the Fertile Crescent, now parts of present-day Lebanon, Syria, and Israel</p> <p><b>Approximate Dates:</b> 1500 BCE – 300 BCE</p>  <p><i>Phoenician traders</i></p>	<p><b>PHOENICIAN CONTRIBUTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known as the “<b>carriers of civilization</b>” for their role in spreading goods, ideas, and religious and cultural practices through trade <input type="text"/></li> <li>Developed a purple dye made from tiny sea snails and used it to create the exclusive purple cloth worn by royalty <input type="text"/></li> <li>Created a <b>22-symbol alphabet</b> that represented vowel and consonant sounds (“<b>phonetic</b>”) and was easier than cuneiform to learn <input type="text"/></li> </ul>

# Ancient Middle East Civilizations: Lasting Contributions

**Keep going!** Read the list of contributions for each civilization. Then follow the instructions on page 4.

<p><b>Civilization: Kingdom of Israel</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> the western coastal part of the Fertile Crescent, present-day Israel</p> <p><b>Approximate Dates:</b> 1040 BCE – 930 BCE</p>	<p><b>HEBREW CONTRIBUTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed the first lasting <b>monotheistic religious system</b> <input type="text"/></li> <li>Followed the <b>Ten Commandments</b>, a religion-based outline of prescribed behavior <input type="text"/></li> <li>Established laws in the <i>Torah</i> that promoted an ethical world view, identifying a sense of right and wrong <input type="text"/></li> </ul>
<p><b>Civilization: Persia</b></p> <p><b>Location:</b> along the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf and into southwestern Asia, present-day Iran</p> <p><b>Approximate Dates:</b> 560 BCE – 330 BCE</p>	<p><b>PERSIAN CONTRIBUTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established the largest empire in the ancient Middle East <input type="text"/></li> <li>Built the <b>Great Royal Road</b> across the empire to expand transportation and communication <input type="text"/></li> <li>Developed a religious system called <b>Zoroastrianism</b>, based on the concept of a day of final judgment and choosing to follow a god of “good” or a god of “evil” <input type="text"/></li> </ul>

