

Section 2: Babylonia and Assyria
The Fertile Crescent

Reading Readiness Guide

Anticipation Guide

How much do you think you know about Babylonia and Assyria? As your teacher reads the statements, mark whether you think each statement is true (T) or false (F) in the Me column. Then discuss your answers with your group and mark the group's decision in the Group column. As you read, look for information that will clarify whether the statements are true or false.

After you read the section, read the statements again and mark the After Reading column to indicate whether they are true or false.

Before Reading		Statements	After Reading
Me	Group		
		1. After winning a war, rulers in the ancient empire of Mesopotamia could feel secure.	
		2. The Babylonians and Assyrians of Mesopotamia did not value culture and learning.	
		3. Asia Minor was located in the present-day country of Japan.	
		4. In the bazaars, or markets, of Babylonia, you could buy things such as cotton cloth from India and spices from Egypt.	
		5. The most feared part of the Assyrian army was the armed charioteers who slashed their way through the enemy.	
		6. Astronomers during the New Babylonian Empire were able to measure the length of a year within a few minutes from the length modern scientists have calculated.	

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Guided Reading and Review

A. As You Read

Directions: As you read Section 2, fill in the table below with details about the rise of Babylonia and Assyria.

Rise of Empires in the Fertile Crescent			
1750 B.C.	650 B.C.	612 B.C.	539 B.C.
1.	2.	3.	4.

Chapter and Section Support

B. Reviewing Key Terms

Directions: In the blanks provided, write the definitions for the following key terms.

5. Babylon

6. empire

7. battering ram

8. caravan

9. bazaar

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Section Quiz

A. Key Terms

Directions: *Fill in the blanks in Column I with the correct terms from Column II.*

Column I

1. When many territories and people are controlled by one government, that government is called a(n) _____.
2. In order to trade goods, a(n) _____ travels between cities.
3. Cotton cloth and spices were sold in the _____.
4. A powerful weapon mounted on wheels was a _____.
5. The capital of an empire that stretched from present-day Turkey to the Persian Gulf was _____.

Column II

- a. bazaar
- b. Babylon
- c. empire
- d. battering ram
- e. caravan

B. Main Ideas

Directions: *Write the letter of the correct answer in each blank.*

- _____ 6. Who united Sumer's city-states into one large empire?
a. Gilgamesh
b. the King of Urartu
c. Sargon II
d. Hammurabi
- _____ 7. Why was Babylon a natural crossroads of trade?
a. It was located between Assyria and the cities of Sumer.
b. It was the capital of the empire.
c. It was located on the Tigris.
d. It had a high elevation.
- _____ 8. Which of these was a military innovation of the Assyrians?
a. cannon
b. battering ram
c. spear
d. explosives

Section 2
Fertile Crescent Empires

Objectives

1. Learn about the three most important empires of the Fertile Crescent.
2. Find out what characterized the Babylonian and Assyrian empires.
3. Investigate the achievements of the Persian Empire.

Target Reading Skill

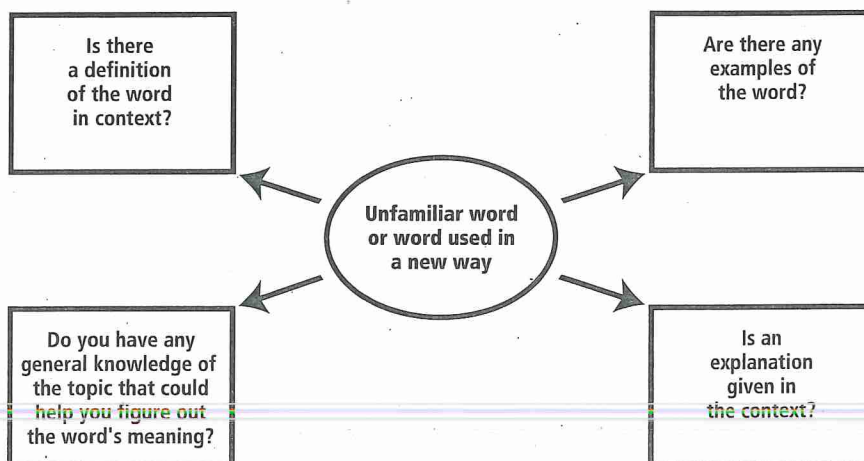
Paraphrase When you paraphrase, you put something into your own words. Paraphrasing is another skill that can help you understand what you read. Putting ideas into your own words will also help you remember what you have read.

For example, look at this sentence: "King Sargon II of Assyria heard the news: Assyria had attacked the nearby kingdoms of Urartu and Zikirtu as planned." You could paraphrase it this way: "King Sargon II of Assyria learned that his country had attacked two kingdoms."

As you read, paraphrase the information following each heading.

Vocabulary Strategy

Using Context to Clarify Meaning Social studies textbooks often contain words that you may not know. Look at a word's context, or the words and sentences just before and after the word, to figure out its meaning. Clues in a word's context can include examples, explanations, or definitions. Use the graphic organizer as a guide to help you figure out the meaning of hard words.



Section 2 Summary

Vocabulary Strategy

As you read this section, look for at least one word that is new to you or that is used in a new way. Use the graphic organizer on the previous page to help you figure out what it means. Use the word's context for help. Write the word below, followed by a brief definition. (**Do not** use any of the Key Terms in blue.)

✓ Reading Check

Who was Hammurabi and what did he accomplish?

✓ Reading Check

How has the library at Nineveh helped us learn about early Mesopotamia?

The Babylonian Empire

- 1 A ruler who conquered all of Mesopotamia created an empire. Rulers of empires gained great wealth from trade and agriculture. Hammurabi (hah muh RAH bee) created the Babylonian Empire in 1787 B.C. The city of
- 5 Babylon was the capital of the Babylonian Empire. ✓
- Babylon became a center of trade. Caravans stopped in Babylon on their way between Sumer and Assyria. Shoppers could buy many items in the city's bazaars. However, all of Babylon's wealth could not save the
- 10 city. Hammurabi's empire shrank and was finally destroyed by invaders in the early 1500s B.C.

The Empire of the Assyrians

Assyria was a small kingdom north of Babylon. Assyria lay on open land so it was easily invaded. As a result, the Assyrians became skilled warriors. They decided that the best way to defend themselves was to attack others. By 650 B.C., Assyria had conquered a large empire. It stretched from the Nile River to the Persian Gulf.

The Assyrians were very good at waging war. They invented the battering ram to pound down city walls. Their armed chariots were able to slash their way through enemy troops.

Assyria's capital was Nineveh (NIN uh vuh). It was a city of great learning with a great library. It had writings from Sumer and Babylon. From these records, we know a great deal about early Mesopotamia. ✓

The people the Assyrians conquered fought against their rule. Two groups, the Medes (meedz) and Chaldeans (kal DEE unz), beat the Assyrians in 612 B.C.

Key Terms

empire (EM pyr) *n.* many territories and peoples controlled by one government

Babylon (BAB uh lahn) *n.* the capital of Babylonia; a city of great wealth and luxury

caravan (KA ruh van) *n.* a group of travelers journeying together

bazaar (buh ZAHR) *n.* a market selling different kinds of goods

Babylonia Rises Again

The Chaldeans made Babylon the center of a new
35 empire. The New Babylonian Empire controlled the
entire Fertile Crescent. King Nebuchadnezzar (neb you
kud NEZ ur) II rebuilt the city. He put up huge walls to
protect the city. The New Babylonian Empire was a
center of learning and science. ✓

40 In 539 B.C., the New Babylonian Empire was con-
quered by the Persians. But the city of Babylon was
spared.

The Persian Empire

The Persians conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. They
built the largest empire the Fertile Crescent had ever
45 known. By 490 B.C., the Persian Empire stretched from
Greece to India.

Persian culture included Zoroastrianism. Unlike
other religions at the time, Zoroastrians only wor-
shipped one god. The Persians formed a complex gov-
50 ernment to rule their empire. They also built a network
of roads that made trade with their neighbors easier.

The Persians tolerated the civilizations of the
people they conquered. They also supported
Babylonian science and mathematics. Persia's cultural
55 achievements have survived to help shape our modern
civilization.

Review Questions

1. What are Babylonia and Assyria?

2. How was the New Babylonian Empire created?

Key Term

Zoroastrianism (zoh roh AS tree on iz um) *n.* a religion that developed in ancient Persia

Target Reading Skill

Paraphrase the bracketed para-
graphs on the previous page.
In your paraphrase, give all the
examples that show how good the
Assyrians were at waging war.

Reading Check

Who was Nebuchadnezzar II?

Reading Check

How did the Persians make
trade easier?
