

Section 3: The Legacy of Mesopotamia  
The Fertile Crescent

## Reading Readiness Guide

### Anticipation Guide

How much do you think you know about the legacy of Mesopotamia? 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. Hammurabi's Code, set down for the people of the empire of Babylonia to follow, had laws for such things as adopting children and practicing medicine.	
		2. According to Hammurabi's Code, a person who accidentally broke a law was not as guilty as a criminal.	
		3. If a victim of a crime was of a higher class, Hammurabi's Code stated that the person responsible for the crime would face a harsher punishment.	
		4. Hammurabi's Code was the first set of organized laws found in history.	
		5. Scribes, record keepers in Mesopotamia, kept their notes and records on an ancient type of paper.	
		6. Before using written words, people drew symbols to represent what they wanted to say.	

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## Guided Reading and Review

### A. As You Read

**Directions:** As you read Section 3, fill in the table below with information about Mesopotamian civilization. Under each main idea, write two supporting statements.

Main Idea A
The rules set down by Hammurabi were an important step in the development of civilization in Mesopotamia.
1.
2.

Main Idea B
Writing was one of the major breakthroughs for the civilizations of Mesopotamia.
3.
4.

### B. Reviewing Key Terms

**Directions:** Complete each sentence by writing the correct term in the blank provided.

5. An organized list of laws is also called a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The king of Babylon from about 1792 to 1750 B.C. was \_\_\_\_\_ creator of the Babylonian Empire.
7. Writing in Mesopotamia combined symbols to make groups of wedges and lines known as \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Section Quiz

### A. Key Terms

**Directions:** Read the statements below. If a statement is true, write T in the blank provided. If it is false, write F. Rewrite false statements on another sheet of paper to make them true.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. King Hammurabi set down rules for everyone in his empire to follow.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Hammurabi's laws were called a code because they were written in a secret language.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Cuneiform was used only in writing government documents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Under Hammurabi, all people were equal before the law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Cuneiform consists of symbols that can express ideas as well as the names of objects, people, or places.

### B. Main Ideas

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Which statement was true of Hammurabi's Code?
  - a. It was illegal to write down the laws.
  - b. A person was guilty only if he or she broke a law on purpose.
  - c. The same laws applied to commoners and slaves.
  - d. Everyone could know the rules and punishments because they were written.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Under Hammurabi's Code, there were laws to cover
  - a. the adoption of children.
  - b. everything except the practice of medicine.
  - c. everything except the hiring of wagons.
  - d. only fights between gentlemen and slaves.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What kind of material did the scribes of Mesopotamia use for writing?
  - a. palm leaves
  - b. clay
  - c. animal skins
  - d. papyrus
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The shape and size of a tablet for writing depended on the
  - a. importance of the writing.
  - b. purpose of the writing.
  - c. date and time of the writing.
  - d. person receiving writing.
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The oldest known writing is
  - a. in cuneiform script.
  - b. in the form of pictures.
  - c. in Hammurabi's Code.
  - d. in the Ten Commandments.

**Prepare to Read**

**Section 3**  
**The Legacy of Mesopotamia**

**Objectives**

1. Learn about the importance of Hammurabi's Code.
2. Find out how the art of writing developed in Mesopotamia.

**Target Reading Skill**

**Summarize** You will learn more from your text if you summarize it. When you summarize text, you use your own words to restate the key points. A good summary includes important events and details. It notes the order in which the events occurred. It also makes connections between the events.

Use the table below to summarize what you will read on the next two pages.

The Legacy of Mesopotamia	
Hammurabi's Code	The Art of Writing

**Vocabulary Strategy**

**Using Context to Clarify Meaning** When you come across a word that you do not know, you may not need to look it up in a dictionary. In this workbook, key terms appear in blue. The definitions are in a box at the bottom of the page. Looking at the definition breaks up your reading. Before you do that, continue to read to the end of the paragraph. See if you can figure out what the word means from its context. Clues can include examples and explanations. Then look at the definition on the bottom of the page to see how accurate you were. Finally, reread the paragraph to make sure you understood what you read.

## Section 3 Summary

### Hammurabi's Code

1 The Babylonians thought there should be a code of law. This code needed to be written down. It should be applied fairly. Hammurabi ruled Babylonia from about 1792 to 1750 B.C. He set rules for all to follow. These  
5 rules were known as Hammurabi's Code. The code told the people how to settle disputes. The code covered all parts of life.

Hammurabi's Code was based partly on the older Sumerian laws. It had 282 laws. The laws were grouped in categories. They included trade, labor, property, and family laws. There were laws for adopting children, practicing medicine, and hiring wagons. There were even laws dealing with wild animals.

Hammurabi's Code was based on the idea of "an  
15 eye for an eye." In other words, the punishment should be similar to the crime. However, the code did not apply equally to all people. The punishment depended on how important the victim was. The higher the class of the victim, the worse the punishment. A person who  
20 accidentally broke a rule was just as guilty as someone who meant to break it. ✓

Hammurabi's Code is important because it was written down. With written laws, everyone knew the rules and the punishments. It was not the first time a  
25 society had set up a code of laws. But it is the first organized set that we have found.

### The Art of Writing

Humans were not always able to read and write. Writing began in Mesopotamia around 3100 B.C. The Sumerians used it to keep records. The first records  
30 were about farm animals. Only a few people knew how to write. Writing was an important skill. Scribes were well respected.

#### Key Terms

**code** (kohd) *n.* an organized list of laws and rules

**Hammurabi** (hah muh RAH bee) *n.* the king of Babylon from about 1792 to 1750 B.C.; creator of the Babylonian empire

### Target Reading Skill

Summarize the bracketed paragraph. Give the main point and two details.

Main point: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

### ✓ Reading Check

What was Hammurabi's Code?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The scribes of Sumer recorded many different types of information. For example, they kept track of the payments, sales, how much food was needed to feed the army and more.

Scribes wrote on clay from the rivers. First they shaped the clay into smooth, flat surfaces called tablets. They used sharp tools to mark letters in the clay. When the clay dried, it left a permanent record.

The size and shape of a tablet depended on its use. Larger tablets were used for reference purposes. They stayed in one place. Smaller tablets were the size of letters or postcards. They were used for personal messages. They even had clay envelopes.

Writing developed over time. At first, shaped pieces of clay were used as tokens, or symbols. Tokens could be used to keep track of how many animals had been bought or sold, or how much food had been grown. By about 3100 B.C., this form of record keeping had developed into writing.

At first, people drew pictures to show what they wanted to say. Each main object had a symbol. The symbols changed when people learned to record ideas as well as facts. Eventually, scribes developed cuneiform. Cuneiform script could be used to stand for different languages. This was helpful in a land of many peoples. ✓

### Vocabulary Strategy

From context clues, write a definition of the word *token*. Circle words or phrases in the text that helped you write your definition.



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### ✓ Reading Check

When, where, and how did writing first develop?

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

How: \_\_\_\_\_

### Review Questions

1. How does the expression "an eye for an eye" fit Hammurabi's Code?

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2. What were some of the tasks of early Mesopotamian scribes?

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#### Key Term

**cuneiform** (kyoo NEE uh fawrm) *n.* groups of wedges and lines used to write several languages of the Fertile Crescent