

The Fertile Crescent

Skills for Life**Identifying Main Ideas**

Directions: Read each of the paragraphs below. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Tigris and Euphrates rivers were the source of life for the peoples of Mesopotamia. In the spring, melting snow picked up tons of topsoil as it rushed down from the mountains and flooded the land. The floods left this topsoil on the plain below. Farmers grew crops in this soil. The rivers also supplied fish; tall, strong reeds used to make boats; and clay for building.

1. What idea(s) do the sentences of the paragraph have in common?

2. Which sentence best states the main idea?

3. What would be a good title for this paragraph?

Writing developed in Mesopotamia around 3100 B.C. Long before Hammurabi issued his code, the people of Sumer developed a system of writing. Writing met the need of Sumerians to keep records. Record keepers were very important—and busy—people in Sumer. The Sumerians earliest written documents are records kept of farm animals. Since only a few people could write, it was one of the most valuable skills in the ancient world. Scribes held positions of great respect in Mesopotamia.

4. What idea(s) do the sentences of the paragraph have in common?

5. Which sentence best states the main idea?
