What is a civilization in the context of world history?

The largest type of human society with cities and broad, common cultural patterns such as a common language and common spiritual beliefs.

**Examples:** Mesopotamia, Egypt, Nubia, India, China, Greece, Rome, European, Mayan, and Islamic

**Opposite:** band, tribe, clan, village
Civilization was an emergent structure, something that had not existed before. It linked already existing villages and farms into larger, more complex networks. Increases in population enabled people to specialize in various professions and new rules governed social classes and social relations. As people specialized, they traded goods and services and engaged in collective learning.

Ironically, the inequalities of social structure and gender made civilizations productive.

Political power, formerly based on consensus building, gave way to coercive leadership as monarchs (and emperors) surrounded by warriors demanded taxes in kind, sons for forced labor and military service, and work from captured slaves.
Characteristics of all Civilizations

- Cities
- Monumental architecture
- Large scale farming
- Multi-cultural populations
- Written language
- Metallurgy, complex technologies
- Complex spiritual beliefs, polytheism
- Complex trade

- Monarchy/Empire
- Hierarchy
- Patriarchy
- Social classes
- Permanent Military
- Warfare
- Slavery
- Written legal codes
- Literate scribes
- Rule from a capital city and control of hinterlands and minorities
Ziggurat of Ur
2100 BCE

One of the grandest historical monuments of all ancient civilizations
MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION
The earliest Civilizations:
(all dates B.C.)
- Sumer: 3200-2360
- Egypt: 2850-715
- Minoan: 2600-1425
- Mesopotamia: 2500-1700
- Indus: 2500-1800
- Shang: 1525-1028

Maps from the World History Chart
MESOPOTAMIAN PROVERBS

Who has not supported a wife or child has not borne a leash.

A joyful heart has the bride; a sorrowful heart, the groom.

A state weak in armaments, the enemy will not be driven from its gates.

You go and carry off the enemy’s land, the enemy comes and carries off your land.

Whatever a man may do, he is but a reed in the wind.
Babylon hath been a cup in the Lord’s hand which made all the earth drunken.

Book of Jeremiah
Old Testament
Mesopotamian Civilization began at the region of Sumer and included several city states.
City states, such as this one at Ur, had 4 gates, a city wall, and special houses for royalty.
Population levels in city-states- 2,600 BCE

Changes in the relationship between humans and nature

Ur - 37,000 in a city of 220 acres
   (SSU is 108 acres)
Lagash - 68,000
Uruk - 50,000 on 1,300 acres

The course of civilized world history has shown a 5,000 year assault on nature Some call it a war on the environment. Deforestation, soil erosion, soil exhaustion, mining, and soil, air and water pollution have ever accelerated and intensified.
Upper part of the Persian Gulf has filled up with silt over the last 5,000 years moving shoreline farther away from original cities of ancient Sumer.
During the late Neolithic Era and at the Dawn of Civilization Mesopotamian city states had governors who were also war leaders. They ruled with an assembly of free adult males.

At this time priests in temples were at the top of society, religion was the center of life, and temples and temple complexes were devoted to gods and goddesses.

As time went on, these governors assumed more power and they emerged as monarchs, heredity monarchs. Dynasties were then established in various city states so that monarchs could pass power down to their sons and grandsons.

As the power of the monarchs grew, the power of priests and assemblies faded.
Herding became a way of life in mountain and desert areas
Sargon of Akkad, the world’s first empire builder, founded a dynasty around 2300 BC which governed Mesopotamia for about a hundred years until an Indo-European tribe, the Gutians, destroyed it.
Estimated Empire of Sargon

2300 BC
Sargon of Akkad
Hammurabi, a ruler of Old Babylonian Empire,
1800-1600 BC
Hammurabi’s Code, carved on a stela
Hammurabi's Code (1780 BCE) presented to him by Shamash (seated), god of law and the sun. Written in Akkadian and carved on basalt (hard volcanic stone), the laws were considered immutable and divine. This also became a Judeo-Christian belief. Laws showed expanding government control.
Purpose of code from prologue

“to promote the welfare of the people..to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and evil, and insure that the strong might not oppress the weak”
Some laws from Hammurabi’s Code

1. **Uses principle of “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.”**
   One law says “If a man has knocked out the eye of a patrician, his eye shall be knocked out.” (Law 196)

2. **The code shows class discrimination,** so that the lower classes receive harsher penalties for a crime committed “If a gentleman destroys the eye of a common man, he will pay one mina of silver” (Law 198) “If a slave smites a gentleman, they shall cut off the ear of the slave.” (Law 205)
3. The laws reflect government regulation of morality to safeguard the social order. Marriages were business relationships between families. Marriage laws protected the reputation of husbands and the legitimacy of offspring in a patriarchal social order. Adultery by the wife was mercilessly punished, usually by drowning, but the husband could engage in consensual sex with a concubine, slave or prostitute.

Law 129 – If a man’s wife be caught lying with another man, they shall be strangled and drowned. If the husband wants to save his wife, the king can save his servant.

Law 138 – If a man wishes to separate from his wife who bore him no children, he shall return her purchase price and dowry, and let her go.

Law 117 – If a man fails to meet a debt, he can sell himself, his wife, his son or daughter for money or give them away to be forced labor; they shall work for three years, and in the fourth year they shall be set free.
Despite Patriarchy, Women’s Rights Protected

Law 142 – If a woman quarrel with her husband and says “You are not congenial to me” she must present the reasons for her judgment. If she is guiltless, and he neglects her, she shall take her dowry and go back to her house.

Law 136 – If a man has fled his city, and after he is gone, his wife enters the house of another man, if the man returns, the wife of the fugitive shall not return to her husband, because he hated his city and fled.
4. **Property safeguarded.** “If a man has stolen goods from a temple, or a house, he shall be put to death.” (Law 6) Law 8 –If anyone steal cattle or sheep, if it belonged to a god or the court, the thief shall pay 30 fold; if they belonged to a freeman, the thief shall pay 10 fold; if the thief cannot pay for the cattle and sheep, he shall be put to death.

5. **Strict government regulation.** Price fixing for basic commodities to avoid price gouging, limitation of interest rate to 20%, responsibility of the city-state to compensate victims of unsolved robbery. (Law 23)
This code sheds much light on the Mesopotamian legal system. Law codes in Mesopotamia and in most ancient civilizations were written by male elites to establish order in society and to control the behavior of women and the masses. They keep non-elites and women in line by threat of severe punishment, much more severe than the punishment applied to men and members of the elite class. At the same time the code tried to protect women and children from neglect and mistreatment. Divorce initiated by either the husband or wife was permitted under specific circumstances,

Many laws related to business transactions and showed the importance of trade and the willingness of the government to intervene to insure fairness in the marketplace,
Ziggurats were Mesopotamia’s monumental architecture. Priests would conduct rituals and astronomers would observe the heavens from the highest point at the top.
Three conquerings by the Assyrians and the establishment of the Assyrian Empire

Militaries in Ancient civilizations
ASSYRIAN EMPIRE (c. 700 B.C.)
Ashurbanipal, Assyrian king of 600’s BC, famous for establishing palace library at Nineveh where Epic of Gilgamesh was found. He was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean ruler who established the New Babylonian Empire.
Assyrian soldiers with spears and helmets
Weapon of intimidation - Horse-drawn bronze chariot
Chaos and destruction of an ancient battle
Ishtar gates, entrance to the city of Babylon
Hanging Gardens of New Babylonian Empire
Conquering of New Babylonian Empire by the Persians under Cyrus II– 539 BCE
Cyrus II conquered the New Babylonian Empire in 539 BC and founded the Persian Empire. He later invaded Greece by land and sea.
The Empire of Cyrus II, 529 B.C.
The Persians had a glorious capital at Persepolis located in what is today Iran.
Successful Elements of Persian Empire

Scholars now consider the Persian Empire one of the most successful of ancient empires. Its rulers balanced central authority with local autonomy. The empire was divided into 20 administrative districts. Each district kept its own surplus, records, and police force. Minorities were allowed to keep their traditions intact. These wise practices went a long way to preventing conflict and insuring peace.
Mesopotamian Contributions to Humankind
CITIES
WRITTEN LANGUAGE
bull’s head

gu₄

ox
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PICTOGRAPHIC SIGN c. 3100 BC</th>
<th>star</th>
<th>?sun over horizon</th>
<th>?stream</th>
<th>ear of barley</th>
<th>bull’s head</th>
<th>bowl</th>
<th>head + bowl</th>
<th>lower leg</th>
<th>?shrouded body</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION</td>
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<td>CUNEIFORM SIGN c. 2400 BC</td>
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<td>CUNEIFORM SIGN c. 700 BC</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHONETIC VALUE*</td>
<td>dingir, an</td>
<td>u₄, ud</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>še</td>
<td>gu₄</td>
<td>nig₂, ninda</td>
<td>ku₂</td>
<td>du, gin, gub</td>
<td>lu₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEANING</td>
<td>god, sky</td>
<td>day, sun</td>
<td>water, seed, son</td>
<td>barley</td>
<td>ox</td>
<td>food, bread</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to walk, to stand</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some signs have more than one phonetic value and some sounds are represented by more than one sign. U₄ means the fourth sign with the phonetic value u.
IRRIGATION TECHNOLOGY
POLYTHEISM
INVENTIONS
WHEEL
PLOW
METALLURGY
ASTRONOMY
Peacemaking in Mesopotamian Civilization

While Hunter/Gatherer bands and Neolithic villages, were based on close kinship ties, the sharing land, tools, and food and an egalitarian social structure, the rise of cities brought new social relationships. People did not know each other as well, and new types of relationships emerged. Getting along meant observing written contracts, keeping oaths, and heeding advice.
Rulers were supposed to be fair and wise. When privately-owned property and social hierarchy became part of life, there were opportunities for some people to become wealthier and more powerful than others. Kings needed to balance public needs and private initiatives. If there was an imbalance, people would perceive unfairness and conflict would arise.

Early edicts in Mesopotamian city-states reflected the desire for fairness. Some of them suspended taxes, prohibited exploitation of the poor, and prohibited price gouging.
When rulers of the city of Nippur paid government officials by giving them land, these officials often amassed great wealth. Sometimes the lands had been taken away from small farmers and conflicts broke out prompting the ruler to divide up and return these privately-owned tracts to the farmers. In that way peace and prosperity were restored. Rulers needed to strike a balance between expenditures on forced labor for public infrastructure and defense and allowing the privatization of businesses and property. Early writings and legal codes show rulers realized equitable economic policies were related to peace.
Social stratification brought structural violence (institutional and systemic injustice). Distinctions between slave and free, native and foreign, and men and women brought discontent especially when slaves and foreigners were conscripted into forced labor and military service.

There is evidence people understood the need for justice and peaceful co-existence. Early epics such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the first written peace treaties, and legal codes such as Hammurabi’s Code, were thought-out with justice as a controlling principle.
Peace lessons of *Epic of Gilgamesh*

The moral of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is that wisdom is more valuable than immortality. Gilgamesh realized it is wiser to live life in the here and now than pursue everlasting life.

In the end he could finally see that his city-state of Uruk was a marvel of ingenuity which would live on after him and continue to flourish. He also realized that the female force which brings children into the world and tends the hearth, is to be respected.
Peace Negotiations in Mesopotamia

Divine aid was sought to resolve disputes. In 2500 BCE Lagash and Umma submitted a boundary dispute for arbitration to the oracle of the chief God Enlil. Enlil’s decision is recorded on a cuniform inscription: “Enlil, by his authoritative command, demarked the boundary, and Mesalim, King of Kish, at the command of Ishtaran, measured it off and erected a monument there.

The arbitration procedure was clear: after the god’s decision had been rendered, a neutral third party, Mesalim, King of Kish, overlord of all Sumer, was commissioned to implement the oracle’s decision.
Mesopotamian storm god Enlil
Peace Elements in Code of Hammurabi

Hammurabi (1810-1750 BCE) ruled the Old Babylonian empire peacefully for the first two decades of his reign. Rather than use soldiers for defeating enemies, he requested them to collect stones for ziggurats. His famous legal code aimed to balance public good and private enterprise, promote equitable economic practices, and safeguard citizens’ rights.
Spiritual beliefs bonded people in the ancient world. Local gods were sometimes fused into one regional god. A common spirituality thus became a uniting factor for the people. In Mesopotamia people worshipped their own god without denying the legitimacy of other gods. Assyrian armies were known to return religious objects to people of a conquered city. Post-war peace settlements were finalized by oaths evoking Assyrian and non-Assyrian gods.
Mesopotamian War and Peace Mosaic (2650 BCE)

This mosaic is divided into two tableaus. The top tableau represents war showing donkey-drawn chariots charging over fallen enemies, spearmen in helmets seizing prisoners, and naked and bound captives brought before an authority figure who stands out in the middle taller than any other figure.

The bottom tableau portrays peace as a lively banquet with people enjoying themselves, musicians serenading with lyres, and plentiful grains, sheep, goats and fish. Whether this was a centerpiece at a feast or as a standard (or banner) in battle, it depicts both war and peace as human experiences.
War and Peace Mosaic of Ur 2650 BCE
Priests and priestesses in Mesopotamia were often the sons and daughters of kings and emperors. Enheduanna, an ancient Sumerian priestess, was the daughter of Sargon of Akkad, the world’s first emperor, who reigned from 2334-2279 BCE. Enheduanna was appointed chief priestess of the temple of Ur. In this position she consolidated the worship of a myriad of local goddesses into the worship of Inanna, a major Sumerian goddess. Enheduanna is believed to be the world’s first writer, and she wrote what may be the first written poem in response to war, in approximately 2300 BCE.
Enheduanna’s anti-war poem

Lament to the Spirit of War
You hack everything down in battle....
God of War, with your fierce wings
you slice away the land and charge
disguised as a raging storm,
You growl like a roaring hurricane,
yell like a tempest yells,
thunder, rage, roar, and drum,
expel evil winds!
Your feet are filled with anxiety!
On your lyre of moans
I hear your loud dirge scream.

Like a fiery monster
you fill the land with poison.
As a rage from the sky
You growl over the earth,
And trees and bushes collapse before you.

You are like blood rushing down a mountain,
A Spirit of hate, greed, and anger,
Dominator of heaven and earth!

Your fire wafts over our land,
mounted on a beast,
with indomitable commands,
you decide all fate.
You triumph over our rites.
Who can explain why you go on so?
Questions on Poem

• Explain the meaning of the words tempest, lyre, dirge, wafts, indomitable, and rites as used in the context of the poem.

• In what spirit is this poem written? What does the title of the poem say to us about Enheduanna’s feeling about war and destruction?

• Is there indication in the poem as to the cause of destruction brought against humanity by the God of War? If so, what is it?

• What are the ways in which the God of War brings about destruction?

• What was Enheduanna hoping to learn by asking the last question in the poem?