

Name _____



Water Without Rain

The plain that became Mesopotamia was good farmland. The rivers carried soil down from the mountains. There was a long season of sunshine. There was only one problem. There was hardly any rain. Plants need water to grow.

There was plenty of water in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Sumerian farmers learned to dig ditches and make water flow into the thirsty fields. The result was almost magical. Enough wheat and barley thrived in the warmth of the desert sun to feed hundreds of people. This was one of the first uses of irrigation in the world.



With irrigation, farming became easier. People had time to learn new skills. Some made pottery for carrying water, storing seed, and preparing food. Others made better tools for digging, planting, and harvesting.

1. Why was the land on the plains good for farming?

2. How did irrigation make cities possible?

3. Name three ways farmers could use pottery.

4. Name three modern tools you would use for digging, planting, or harvesting vegetables in a garden.

For Info Archaeologists: Use reference sources to dig up the answers to these questions:

5. What tools did Mesopotamians use to make farming easier?

6. Find at least one problem caused by irrigation.





Name _____

It's the Law: Hammurabi

In 1750 B.C.E. a king named Hammurabi rose to power in Babylon. He united much of Mesopotamia under one rule for the first time in centuries.

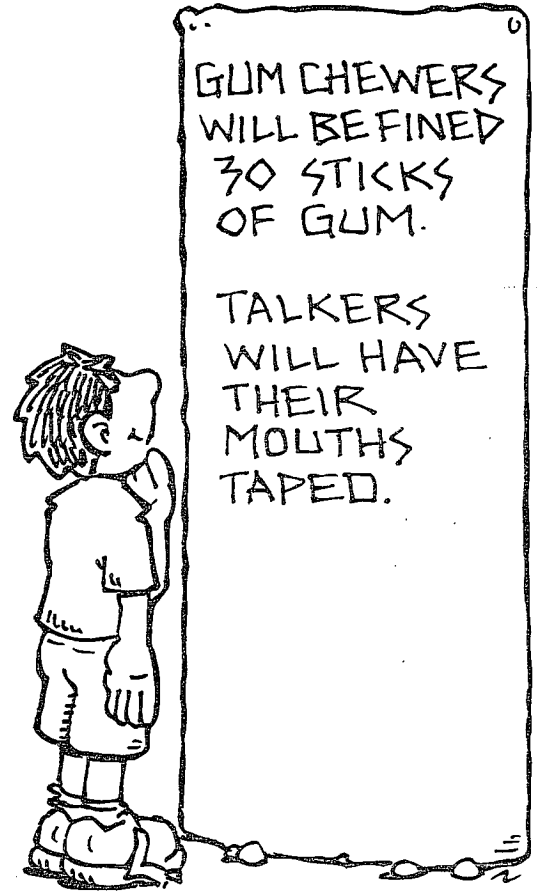
He was a powerful military leader, but that is not why we remember him. Hammurabi is known as a lawgiver. Actually, many Mesopotamian rulers created codes of law, but we do not have them because they were written on clay tablets which crumbled. Hammurabi had his laws engraved on a column of polished black rock over seven feet high. The stone, or stele, was set up in the middle of the city. The 282 decisions tell us much about justice at the time.

There were no police to arrest offenders. Victims had to drag wrong-doers into court. Both sides swore to tell the truth. A judge listened to testimony and made a decision.

The phrase "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" comes from one of Hammurabi's punishments, but it was not his idea. It was an old Sumerian concept—exact revenge. Another way to put it would be, "What I take from you, you may take from me." For example, if a builder used poor materials and the house he constructed killed someone when it collapsed, he could be executed. Some offenses were punished by fines. Jails were not mentioned.

Answer the following questions *true* or *false*:

1. Hammurabi was the first king to write and enforce laws in Mesopotamia. _____
2. Police arrested offenders and brought them to court. _____
3. Witnesses swore to tell the truth. _____
4. Some of Hammurabi's laws originally came from ancient Egypt. _____
5. Hammurabi was a good military leader. _____
6. Hammurabi expanded Babylonia's empire. _____
7. Hammurabi kept the stele with the laws on it in his palace. _____



DID YOU KNOW?

According to Hammurabi's Code, a person could not be forced to work more than three years as a slave to pay off a debt.