

# Introduction

History is the living record of the human race—exciting as it is varied. *The Time Traveller Series* will aid you as you teach the colorful history of ancient civilizations to your children and explore such topics as the development of language, early government, ancient cultures and art forms, scientific discoveries, and the historic personalities who helped shape our own present-day culture.

After each topic is presented, activity pages are provided for your children to implement suggested vocabulary, conduct further research, and provide creative answers/solutions to historical situations. Fun reproducible pages are also included to review the historical and cultural facts studied on the preceding pages.

Each book contains the following:

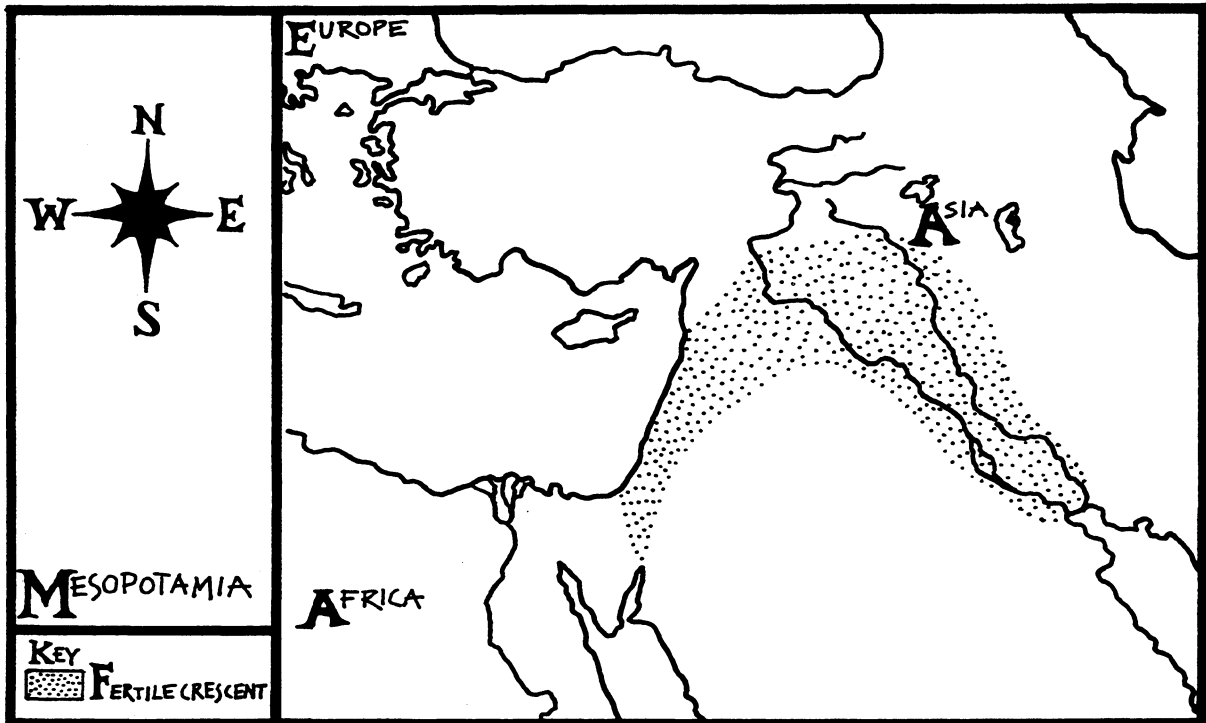
- topic information pages
- research/activity pages (including maps, charts, research topics, and creative thinking activities)
- reproducible activity pages

*The Time Traveller Series* was created to spark the intrigue of your children and lay a foundation for enjoyable history instruction and learning. Have fun!

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# An Overview of Mesopotamia



Seven thousand years ago, wandering tribes settled in the Tigris and Euphrates River Valley in what is now Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. The land was called Mesopotamia, which means "land between two rivers." The Sumerians were the first civilization of people in Mesopotamia. The Sumerians built cities that held beautiful palaces and temples. They were masterful craftsmen, and created goods that were sold in neighboring lands. They built huge walls around their cities as protection from invaders.

The most powerful city-state in the region was Ur, a trade center located on the Euphrates River near the Persian Gulf. Ur, as well as other Sumerian city-states, were ruled by a lugal, or king. The most important duty of the lugal was to win wars, which were fought often. There were some wealthy aristocrats, but most of the people worked for the king, in the army, in the ziggurat temple, or at a trade.

Sumerians developed the first known written language, called cuneiform, which means "wedge-shaped." Thanks to ancient scribes, we can