VI- History/ Civics
Ch- 1(B): The River Valley Civilization

KEY POINTS:-

- The river valley civilizations- Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Chinese.
- Know about their society, religion, arts and crafts.

I. MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION:

Click on:- [https://youtu.be/KY05g30v2Xo](https://youtu.be/KY05g30v2Xo)

- Mesopotamia is Iraq of modern times.
- Mesopotamia is a Greek word, which means ‘land between the two rivers’.
- The two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, flowing through the region. Mesopotamia is a land between these rivers.
- The span of this civilization was from 5000 B.C. TO 500 B.C.
- The lower part of the Mesopotamia valley was called the Sumer region. The people living there were called Sumerians.
RELIGIOUS DOMINANCE:
- Religion dominated the Mesopotamian civilization.
- The chief gods worshipped were Enlil, Marduk, Assur, Ishtar, etc.
- The Sumerians had built many temples of gods. These were called Ziggurats.

THREE SOCIAL CLASSES:
1) The upper class, which comprised of the ruling class, the nobles, the royal people and high officials. They led a very comfortable and luxurious life.
2) The middle class, which consisted of landlords, merchants and traders, craftsmen and artisans. They also led a happy life.
3) The lower class, consisted of slaves, the labour class and the tillers of the land. Slavery prevailed in Mesopotamia, but slaves were not treated harshly.

- **OCCUPATION AND CRAFTS:**
  - The land in Mesopotamia was very fertile, so agriculture was their main occupation.
  - The domestication of animals, goldsmith, blacksmith, weavers and potters were the other occupations.

- **HUMMURABI AND HIS CODE OF LAW:**
  - Hummurabi was a great king of Mesopotamians. He ruled during the period 2067 B.C. to 2025 B.C. One of his greatest achievements was his code of law.
  - Main features of Hummurabi’s code of law:
    - His laws or code covered every aspect of life. These laws were 282 in number.
- The code recognized the division of society into rich men, poor men and slaves and prescribed different punishments for different classes for the same crime.
- The main principle of the code was that “the strong shall not injure the weak.
- The code also contained rules about family life, trading, treatment of workers.

➢ SYSTEM OF WRITING:
- The Mesopotamians were the first to develop the art of writing in the world by drawing pictures.
- They wrote on tablets of clay with the help of a reed or bone. For this reason their script came to be known as cuneiform script.
- They wrote with a sharp pen called stylus.
- They had developed 350 signs.
- This can be seen in London museum and have been deciphered by scholars.
GROWTH OF KNOWLEDGE:

- The Mesopotamians made a great contribution in the growth of knowledge.
- There was a big library having more than 30000 tablets. The Tello library was perhaps the first library of the world.
- The Mesopotamians had interest in mathematics as well. 60 was an important number in their numerals. Their system of counting was sexagesimal.

- The Mesopotamians were quite good in astronomy.

II. EGYP TIAN CIVILIZATION:

Click on: https://youtu.be/3EvTQhqXiEA
- Egypt is a large country located in the eastern part of the Sahara desert in North Africa.
- Except for the narrow strip of fertile and stretching along the banks of river Nile, the rest of the country is desert.
- Egypt was called the Gift of the Nile by the Romans and the Greeks.
- The civilization of Egypt developed during 3000 to 2000 B.C.

**THE EGYPTIAN SOCIETY:**
- There were four classes in the Egyptian society.
- The highest in the rank was the king. He was called the pharaoh. He had absolute powers.
- The second class belong to the priest and government officials.
- In class three there were farmers, cultivators, craftsmen and artisans.
- The lowest in the social system were the slaves. They lived in misery and poverty.
- Egyptian women enjoyed a good status in society. They could own and inherit property. They were even permitted to ascend the thrown. Queen Hatshepsut was the first to ascend the thrown.
**OCCUPATIONS AND CRAFTS:**
- Agriculture was the main occupation of ancient Egyptians. They grew wheat, barley, millet, cotton and fruits.
- They also domesticated animals.
- Crafts like pottery, spinning and weaving flex, cloth making, jewellery making, etc. were other occupations.

**RELIGION:**
- The ancient Egyptians worshipped as many as 2200 gods and goddesses. Of all these, Re-the sun-god was the most important.
- Egyptians also worshipped some animals like the cow, snake, crocodile, etc.
They believed that both body and soul lived after death. They took great care to preserve the dead bodies. Such a preserved dead body is known as a mummy.

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE:
- The Egyptians had achieved a very high standard in the fields of art, architecture and sculpture. This can be known from:
  a) The Pyramids
  b) The Sphinx
  c) The Temples.

a) The Pyramids:
- The Egyptians built pyramids. These were the tombs of the royal family. Three pyramids at Gizeh are indeed very important. The two most spectacular pyramids are those of pharaohs Khufu and Khafre.
The walls of the pyramids were decorated with beautiful paintings.

b) The Sphinx:
   - The great sphinx is another astonishing monument in Gizeh, near Cairo. It is the structure of mythological animal. The sphinx has the head of a man and the body of a lion. It is carved out of a single stone.

c) The Temples:
   - The ancient Egyptians also built temples. Most of them are on or near the river Nile, particularly near Thebes. Three temples in Egypt are very famous, namely, the temple at Karnak, the temple of Abu Simbel and the temple at Luxor. The walls of the temples have beautiful paintings on them.
HIEROGLYPHIC SCRIPT OF EGYPT:

- The Egyptians also knew the art of writing. Their script is called Hieroglyphic script or the sacred writing, because it was used by the priest. It was deciphered by Champollion who was a great French decipherer. It was a type of picture writing.
- At first, the Egyptians wrote on stones, walls or clay tablets. Later on, they made a sort of paper from the reeds and leaves of a tree called Papyrus. (The present word paper is derived from this word Papyrus.)
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION:
- Egyptians developed the solar calendar.
- They gave to the world the measurements of the triangle and rectangle.
- They also developed the decimal system of counting.
- They knew about chemicals that could preserve the bodies of the dead.

III. THE HWANG–HO CIVILIZATION (CHINESE CIVILIZATION):

Click on:- [https://youtu.be/WJVIRx5VxUw](https://youtu.be/WJVIRx5VxUw)

- Located in East Asia, China witnessed the rise of great civilization nearly 4500 years ago.
- The civilization flourished in the river basin of three main rivers in China-The Hwang-Ho in the North, The Yangtse-Kiang in the centre and The Sikiang in the South.
- Chinese civilization developed during the Shang dynasty.
THE PEOPLE AND THE SOCIETY:
- The society in China was divided into classes.
- The emperor or the king and his family held the top position.
- The nobles, the scholars, merchants, artisans, craftsmen and the cultivators formed the second class.
- The lowest in rank and position in the society were the slaves.
- The soldiers were held in high esteem by the people. Defence was given high importance in the Chinese civilization.

OCCUPATIONS AND CRAFTS:
- Agriculture was the main occupation. Wheat, rice, millet, soyabean and tea were the main crops.
- Carpentry and woodwork were other occupations.
- Bronze casting became a large scale business under the Shang dynasty.
- Silk production and silk industry was also an occupation of Chinese people.
- The Chinese developed paper, the making of paper became another important occupation of the people during this period.

ARCHITECTURE:
- The Chinese had developed an excellent sense of architectural work. One of the best specimens of their achievement in this
field is the Great Wall of China which is considered as one of the seven wonders of the world.
- Other significant pieces of Chinese architecture are the stupa type temples called Pagodas.

➢ RELIGIOUS BELIEFS:
  - The Chinese religion is one of the oldest form of religion. Evidence of burial practices has been dated to as early as 5000 BCE.
  - The Chinese were worshippers of nature God.
  - They regarded the king of China as son of the heaven god called Shangli.

➢ CONFUCIUS:
  - Confucius was one of the greatest philosophers of China and the world. He lived during 551 B.C. to 479 B.C. His teachings have a universal appeal.
  - The philosophy and religion advocated by him is known as Confucianism. His main teachings may be summed up briefly as under:
    - Confucius believed in humility towards all.
    - He taught “Do unto others, as you wish others to do unto you.”
    - He taught his followers to respect their elders and ancestors.
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- The Chinese made a remarkable advancement in astronomy. They counted that there were 365 days and 12 months in a year. They devised a big astronomical clock. They used lunar and solar calendars. They could also predict eclipses.
- They also developed a system to keep record of weather, rainfall, droughts, floods, etc. The Chinese invented the seismograph. By using it, they could predict the earthquakes and keep their record.
- Other inventions made by the Chinese included the mariner’s compass, the umbrella, paper and gun powder.
- They were also the first to invent the writing ink. They introduced baking and paper currency first among all.

NEW WORDS:

1. **Clay-tablet**: A flat surface made of clay with words cut or written on it.
2. **Decipher**: To convert from a code to plain text.
3. **Code of law**: A collection of laws arranged in a systematic way.
4. **Cuneiformscript**: The system of writing used most extensively in the ancient Middle East.
5. **Stylus**: Sharp point used to make grooves on a hard surface.
6. **Pharaoh**: Egyptian king.
7. **Mummy**: A preserved human body.
8. **Pyramid**: An Egyptian stone structure with square base and slanting sides.
9. **Pagoda**: A religious building on a sacred tower of pyramidal form.
WORKSHEET

Q-1. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:
1) Name the two rivers on which the Mesopotamian civilization flourished.
2) Name the chief Gods worshipped in Mesopotamia.
3) Who was Hummurabi?
4) What was stylus?
5) Define sexagesimal.
6) Name the civilization which flourished on the banks of river Nile.
7) What is a Mummy?
8) What is hieroglyphic script?
9) Who deciphered the hieroglyphic script?
10) What are Pagodas?
11) Name the most important occupation of the people of Hwang-Ho civilization.
12) Mention the two periods of following civilizations:
    i. Mesopotamian
    ii. Egyptian
    iii. Chinese

Q-2. FILL IN THE BLANKS:
1) The system of counting of Mesopotamians was __________.
2) The people living in Sumer region were called the __________.
3) The rulers of ancient Egypt were called __________.
4) The Sphinx has the head of a ___________ and the body of a ___________.
5) A preserved dead body is known as _____________.
6) Stupa type temples in China are known as _____________.

Q-3. MATCH THE FOLLOWING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Papyrus</td>
<td>a. Was the temple of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hummurabi</td>
<td>b. The Great Wall Of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ziggurat</td>
<td>c. An Egyptian wild plant used for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Built as defence strategy</td>
<td>d. An important Chinese industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Silk production</td>
<td>e. Is known for his code of law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q-4. TRUE OR FALSE:

1) Mesopotamia is Egypt of modern times.
2) Egypt was called the Gift of the river Hwang-Ho.
3) The Chinese thought that there was life after death.
4) Silk production and silk industry was an important economic activity of Egyptian people.
5) Confucius was one of the greatest philosophers of Mesopotamia.
Q-1. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

1) Euphrates and Tigris
2) The chief gods worshipped were Enlil, Marduk, Assur, Ishtar, etc.
3) Hummurabi was the great king of the Mesopotamians.
4) Stylus is a sharp point used to make grooves on a hard surface.
5) The Mesopotamians system of counting was called as sexagesimal.
6) Egyptian civilization
7) Mummy is a preserved human body.
8) The Egyptians writing script is called hieroglyphic script or the sacred writing, because it was used by the priests.
9) Hieroglyphic script was deciphered by Champollion who was a great French decipherer.
10) Pagoda is a religious building on a sacred tower of pyramidal form.
11) Agriculture and Carpentry
12) 1. 5000 to 500 B.C.
     2. 3000 to 2000 B.C., 2000 to 1750 B.C.
     3. 1750 to 1100 B.C.

Q-2. FILL IN THE BLANKS:

1) Sexagesimal
2) Sumerian
3) Pharaoh
4) Man, lion
5) Mummy
6) Chinese

Q-3. MATCH THE FOLLOWING:

1) c
2) e
3) a
4) b
5) d
Q-4. TRUE OR FALSE:

1) False- Mesopotamia is Iraq of modern times.
2) False- Egypt was called the Gift of the river Nile.
3) False- The Egyptian thought that there was life after death.
4) False- Silk production and silk industry was an important economic activity of Chinese people.
5) False- Confucius was one of the greatest philosophers of Chinese.