



# WELCOME TO STUDYSHIP WITH KRATI

- This is KRATI SAHU
- Educational Content Creator
- University of Delhi



Textbook in History  
for Class XI

# THEMES IN WORLD HISTORY



**THEME 01: CLASS 11**

# WRITING AND CITY LIFE

GET NOTES FOR THIS CHAPTER

EXPLANATION AS PER LATEST SYLLABUS

Website for notes- [www.studyshipwithkrati.com](http://www.studyshipwithkrati.com)





# FEATURES OF MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION

- Mesopotamian civilization is known for its prosperity, city life, voluminous and rich literature, its mathematics and astronomy.
- Mesopotamia's writing system and literature spread to the eastern Mediterranean, northern Syria, and Turkey.



# SOURCES TO UNDERSTAND MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION

- We study hundreds of Mesopotamian buildings, statues, ornaments, graves, tools and seals as sources.
- There are thousands of written documents as well to study Mesopotamian Civilization.



# MESOPOTAMIA AND ITS GEOGRAPHY

1. Mesopotamia is a land of diverse environments. In the north-east lie green, undulating plains, gradually rising to tree-covered mountain ranges with clear streams and wild flowers, with enough rainfall to grow crops.
2. In the north, there is a stretch of upland called a steppe, where animal herding offers people a better livelihood than agriculture – after the winter rains, sheep and goats feed on the grasses and low shrubs that grow here.
3. In the east, tributaries of the Tigris provide routes of communication into the mountains of Iran.
4. The south is a desert – and this is where the first cities and writing emerged. This desert could support cities because the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, which rise in the northern mountains, carry loads of silt. When they flood or when their water is let out on to the fields, fertile silt is deposited.
5. Not only agriculture, Mesopotamian sheep and goats that grazed on the steppe, the north-eastern plains and the mountain slopes produced meat, milk and wool in abundance. Further, fish was available in rivers and date-palms gave fruit in summer.



# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF URBANISM IN MESOPOTAMIA

1. Urban centers involve in various economic activities such as food production, trade, manufactures and services. City people, thus, cease to be self-sufficient and depend on the products or services of other people. There is continuous interaction among them.
2. For instance, the carver of a stone seal requires bronze tools that he himself cannot make, and colored stones for the seals that he does not know where to get. He depends on others for his needs. The division of labor is a mark of urban life.
3. There must be a social organization in Cities. Fuel, metal, various stones, wood, etc., come from many different places for city manufacturers. Thus, organized trade, storage, deliveries of grain and other food items from the village to the city were controlled and supervised by the rulers.



# MOVEMENT OF GOODS INTO CITIES AND COMMUNICATION

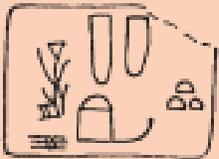
1. Mesopotamia was rich in food resources but its mineral resources were few. Most parts of the south lacked stones for tools, seals and jewels; the wood for carts, cart wheels or boats; and there was no metal for tools, vessels or ornaments.
2. So Mesopotamians could have traded their abundant textiles and agricultural produce for wood, copper, tin, silver, gold, shell and various stones from Turkey and Iran, or across the Gulf.
3. Regular exchange was possible only when there was a social organization to equip foreign expeditions and exchanges of goods.
4. Besides crafts, trade and services, efficient transport is also important for urban development. To carry grain into cities pack animals were used.
5. The cheapest mode of transportation is over water. Riverboats or barges loaded with sacks of grain are propelled by the current of the river. The canals and natural channels of ancient Mesopotamia were in fact routes of goods transport between large and small settlements.



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING IN MESOPOTAMIA

1. All societies have languages in which spoken sounds convey certain meanings. This is verbal communication. Writing too is verbal communication – but in a different way.
2. The first Mesopotamian tablets were written around 3200 BCE, which contained picture-like signs and numbers. These were about 5,000 lists of oxen, fish, bread loaves, etc. – lists of goods that were brought into or distributed from the temples of Uruk.
3. Mesopotamians wrote on tablets of clay. A scribe would wet clay and pat it into a size he could hold comfortably in one hand. He would carefully smoothen its surface. With the sharp end of a reed, he would press wedge-shaped ('cuneiform\*') signs on to the smoothened surface while it was still moist.
4. Once dried in the sun, the clay tablet would harden and tablets would be almost as indestructible as pottery. Once the surface dried, signs could not be pressed on to a tablet: so each transaction, however minor, required a separate written tablet.
5. By 2600 BCE, the letters became cuneiform, and the language was Sumerian. Writing was now used not only for keeping records, but also for making dictionaries, giving legal validity to land transfers, narrating the deeds of kings, and announcing the changes a king had made in the customary laws of the land.
6. Sumerian, the earliest known language of Mesopotamia, was gradually replaced after 2400 BCE by the Akkadian language. Cuneiform writing in the Akkadian language continued in use until the first century CE,

Clay tablets c.3200 BCE. Each tablet is 3.5 cm or less in height, with picture-like signs (ox, fish, grain, boat) and numbers (|)



se

kur

i

ma

Cuneiform syllabic signs.



## **The System of Writing in cuneiform**

1. Cuneiform sign did not represent a single consonant or vowel (such as *m* or *a* in the English alphabet), but syllable (say-*put-come-in-*).
2. Thus, the signs that a Mesopotamian scribe had to learn ran into hundreds, and he had to be able to handle a wet tablet and get it written before it dried. So, writing was a skilled craft but, more important, it was an enormous intellectual achievement, conveying in visual form the system of sounds of a particular language.

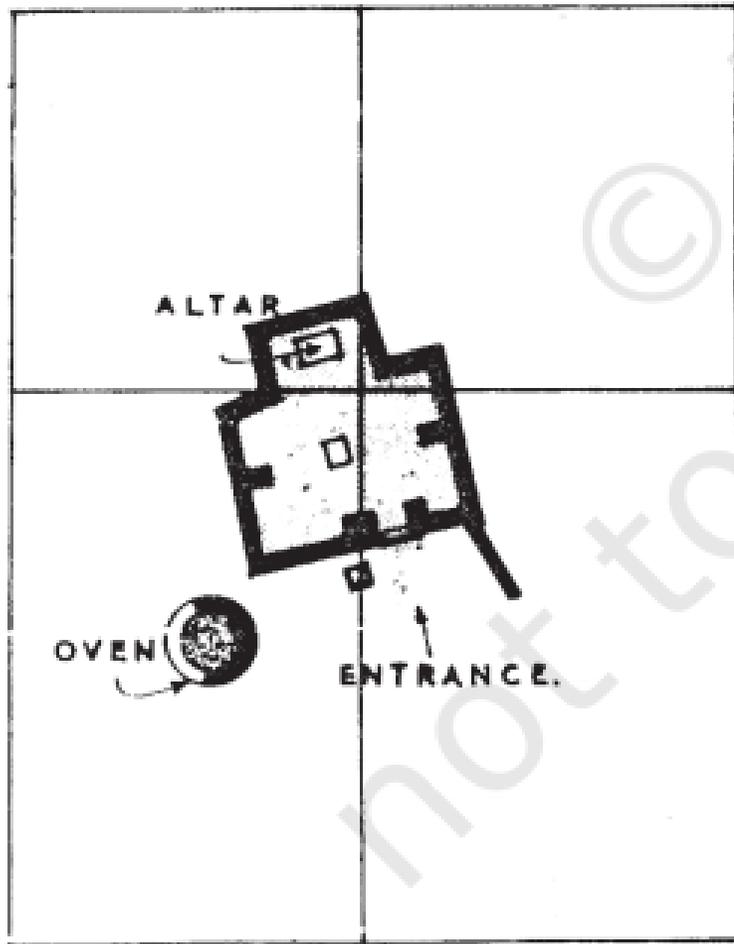
## **Literacy in Mesopotamia**

1. Very few Mesopotamians could read and write. Not only there were hundreds of signs to learn but many of these were complex.
2. For the most part, however, writing reflected the mode of speaking.



# CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF TEMPLES IN MESOPOTAMIA

1. The earliest cities emerged around temples, some cities developed as centers of trade and some were imperial cities. Early settlers began to build and rebuild temples at selected spots in their villages.
2. The earliest known temple was a small shrine made of unbaked bricks. Temples were the residences of various gods: Moon God and sun God or the Goddess of Love and War.
3. Temples became larger over time, with several rooms around open courtyards. Some of the early ones were possibly not unlike the ordinary house but temples always had their outer walls going in and out at regular intervals, which no ordinary building ever had.
4. The god was the focus of worship: to him or her people brought grain, curd and fish. The god was also the theoretical owner of the agricultural fields, the fisheries, and the herds of the local community.
5. Production processes such as Oil pressing, grain grinding, spinning, and the weaving of woollen cloth done in the temple. The temple gradually developed its activities and became the main urban institution by organizing production, employing merchants and keeping of written records of distributions and allotments of grain, plough animals, bread, beer, fish, etc.



*A temple of a later period, c.3000 BCE, with an open courtyard and in-and-out façade (as excavated).*



# ROLE OF KINGS IN CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF TEMPLES IN MESOPOTAMIA

1. As the archaeological record shows, villages were periodically relocated in Mesopotamian history because of flood in the river and change in the course of the river. There were man-made problems as well. Those who lived on the up stream stretches of a channel could divert so much water into their fields that villages of downstream were left without water.
2. When there was continuous warfare in a region, those chiefs who had been successful in war could oblige their followers by distributing the loot, and could take prisoners from the defeated groups to employ in the temple for various works.
3. In time, victorious chiefs began to offer precious booty to the gods and thus beautify the community's temples. They would send men out to fetch fine stones and metal for the benefit of the god and community and organize the distribution of temple wealth in an efficient way by accounting for things that came in and went out.
4. War captives and local people were put to work for the temple, or directly for the ruler. This, rather than agricultural tax, was compulsory. Those who were put to work were paid rations. It has been estimated that one of the temples took 1,500 men working 10 hours a day, five years to build.
5. With rulers commanding people to fetch stones or metal ores, to come and make bricks or lay the bricks for a temple, or else to go to a distant country to fetch suitable materials. Hundreds of people were put to work at making and baking clay cones that could be pushed into temple walls, painted in different colours, creating a colorful mosaic.



# LIFE IN THE CITY OF UR

1. In Mesopotamian society the nuclear family was the norm, although a married son and his family often resided with his parents. The father was the head of the family.
2. We know a little about the procedures for marriage. A declaration was made about the willingness to marry by the bride's parents. When the wedding took place, gifts were exchanged by both parties, who ate together and made offerings in a temple.
3. Ur was one of the earliest cities to have been excavated in Mesopotamia. Narrow winding streets indicate that wheeled carts could not have reached many of the houses. Sacks of grain and fire wood would have arrived on donkey-back. Narrow winding streets and the irregular shapes of house plots also indicate an absence of town planning.
4. There were no street drains of the kind we find in contemporary Mohenjo-Daro. Drains and clay pipes were instead found in the inner courtyards of the Ur houses and it is thought that house roofs sloped inwards and rainwater was channeled via the drainpipes into sumps in the inner courtyards.
5. Yet people seem to have swept all their household refuses into the streets, to be trodden underfoot! This made street levels rise, and over time the thresholds of houses had also to be raised so that no mud would flow inside after the rains.



*A residential area  
at Ur, c. 2000 BCE.  
Can you locate,  
besides the  
winding streets,  
two or three blind  
alleys?*



Website for notes- [www.studyshipwithkrati.com](http://www.studyshipwithkrati.com)



6. Light came into the rooms not from windows but from doorways opening into the courtyards: this would also have given families their privacy.

7. **There were superstitions about houses, recorded in omen tablets at Ur:** A raised threshold brought wealth;

8. A front door that did not open towards another house was lucky.

9. If the main wooden door of a house opened outwards (instead of inwards), the wife would be a torment to her husband.

10. There was a town cemetery at Ur in which the graves of royalty and commoners have been found, but a few individuals were found buried under the floors of ordinary houses. Dead bodies of royal family were buried with jeweler, gold vessels, wooden musical instruments inlaid with white shell and lapis lazuli, ceremonial daggers of gold, etc.



# A TRADING TOWN IN A PASTORAL ZONE( LIFE IN THE CITY OF MARI)

1. After 2000 BCE the royal capital of Mari flourished. Mari stands not on the southern plain with its highly productive agriculture but much further upstream on the Euphrates. Here agriculture and animal rearing were carried out close to each other in this region.
2. Herders need to exchange young animals, cheese, leather and meat in return for grain, metal tools, etc., and the manure of a penned flock is also of great use to a farmer. Yet, at the same time, there may be conflict between the regions.
3. In Mesopotamian nomadic communities of the western desert filtered into the prosperous agricultural heartland. Shepherds would bring their flocks into the sown area in the summer.
4. Such groups would come in as herders, harvest labourers or hired soldiers, occasionally become prosperous, and settle down. A few gained the power to establish their own rule. These included the Akkadians, Amorites, Assyrians and Aramaeans.
5. The kings of Mari, however, had to be vigilant; herders of various tribes were allowed to move in the kingdom, but they were watched. The camps of herders are mentioned frequently in letters between kings and officials. In one letter, an officer writes to the king that he has been seeing frequent fire signals at night – sent by one camp to another – and he suspects that a raid or an attack is being planned.
6. Located on the Euphrates in a prime position for trade – in wood, copper, tin, oil, wine, and various other goods that were carried in boats along the Euphrates – between the south and the mineral rich uplands of Turkey, Syria and Lebanon.
7. Boats carrying grinding stones, wood, and wine and oil jars, would stop at Mari on their way to the southern cities. Officers of this town would go aboard, inspect the cargo and levy a charge of about one-tenth the value of the goods before allowing the boat to continue downstream.
8. Thus, although the kingdom of Mari was not militarily strong, but it was exceptionally prosperous.



# THE LEGACY OF WRITING (SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY) IN MESOPOTAMIA

1. Perhaps the greatest legacy of Mesopotamia to the world is its scholarly tradition of time reckoning and mathematics.
2. Dating around 1800 BCE are tablets with multiplication and division tables, square- and square-root tables, and tables of compound interest. For Example- the square root of 2 was given as:  $1 + 24/60 + 51/60^2 + 10/60^3$ .
3. Students had to solve problems such as the following: a field of area such and such is covered one finger deep in water; find out the volume of water.
4. The division of the year into 12 months according to the revolution of the moon around the earth, the division of the month into four weeks, the day into 24 hours, and the hour into 60 minutes – all that we take for granted in our daily lives – has come to us from the Mesopotamians.
5. Whenever solar and lunar eclipses were observed, their occurrence was noted according to year, month and day. So too there were records about the observed positions of stars and constellations in The night sky.
6. None of these momentous Mesopotamian achievements would have been possible without writing and the urban institution of schools, where students read and copied earlier written tablets, and where some boys were trained to become not record keepers for the administration, but intellectuals who could build on the work of their predecessors.

# LET'S CONNECT TO LEARN WITH ME



kratisahu2605 ▾

152 Posts 3,845 Followers 128 Following

**Krati Sahu**  
Personal Blog  
Youtuber | +95k subscribers  
I marketise my knowledge!  
DM for Collaboration 📩  
Try EduGorilla Test series 🌟  
testseries.edugorilla.com/?utm\_source=youtube&utm\_med...

Edit Profile Promotions

Insights Add Shop Email

Election series HH Series Batch 5 ❤️

WATCH FULL VID |  
WATCH MYT AID |

/kratisahu2605

**Studyship With Krati** 😊  
1,753 subscribers

**Description**

- \*UPSC exam preparation
- \*DU admission queries
- \*Guidance for board exams 10,11 and \*12th (Humanities stream student)

t.me/Studyshipwithkrati

Invite Link

Notifications On

Media Files Links Voice GIFs

**IAN POLITY**  
mikanth  
Historical Background  
LECTURE-2  
LIVE SESSION

History Class 11  
**Marathon on Constitution: Bricks, Beads & Bones**

History Class 12  
**Marathon: Bricks, Beads & Bones**

Political Science Class 11  
**Constitution When & How**  
Marathon Part 1

Studyship is closing its 12th session. We are accepting registration for our next batch that's going to start after 15th July. No more sessions will be available. We may contact U to know more.

[StudyshipWithKrati](https://t.me/StudyshipWithKrati)

Krati Sahu ▾

Overview Ads Inbox Not

**Educational Content**  
**JOIN MY COMMUNITY**  
6TH TO 12TH NCERT + COMPETITION की तैयारी अब STUDYSHIP के साथ

**Krati Sahu**  
@Kratisahu2605

Get WhatsApp Messages

Post Reel Promote View As Edit Page

Home Events Reviews About Video

Create a post

**f** /Kratisahu2605



# MY OTHER YT CHANNELS



The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for 'Studysip With Krati 2'. At the top, there is a banner with the text 'SUBSCRIBE KARO "STUDYSHIP WITH KRATI 2"' and social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. Below the banner, the channel name 'Studysip With Krati 2' is displayed with a profile picture and '33K subscribers'. A red 'SUBSCRIBE' button is visible. The navigation menu includes 'HOME', 'VIDEOS', 'PLAYLISTS', 'COMMUNITY', 'CHANNELS', and 'ABOUT'. The 'Subscriptions' section shows three channels: 'Studysip with Krati' (76.6K subscribers), 'ZESTY' (1.47K subscribers, with a 'SUBSCRIBED' button), and 'KT Vlogs' (11.2K subscribers, with a 'SUBSCRIBE' button). The 'Created playlists' section displays a row of playlist thumbnails with titles such as 'JERUSALEM', 'Ch-1 The Cold War Era and NAM', 'Ch-2 Kings, Farmers and Towns', 'MISSION BOARDS Class - 12th HISTORY NCERT Ch-1 (Part-1) BRICKS, BEADS AND ROMES', 'Mission Boards Class 12th Ncert CH-1 (Part-1) Cold War Era And NAM Political science', and 'BA (Hons) में क्या 8या subjects पढ़ने होते हैं?'.



THANKS FOR WATCHING!

