Essential Question:

- What were the important characteristics of the civilizations in Mesopotamia?

Warm-Up Question:

- Why was the Neolithic Revolution such a big deal?
- Which of the 5 characteristics of civilizations do you think is most important?
River Valley Civilizations

The discovery of farming during the Neolithic Revolution allowed nomadic people to settle into civilizations
The world’s first civilizations all began in river valleys.

The first civilization began in an area known as Mesopotamia.
Mesopotamia means "land between the rivers" & is often called the "Fertile Crescent" or as the "Cradle of Civilization." The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers flooded once per year, leaving behind fertile soil ideal for farming.
The first civilization developed in the Fertile Crescent: Sumer

But, surrounding deserts & the lack of natural barriers attracted outsiders to Mesopotamia made the Sumerians vulnerable to attack.
The Middle East: “The Crossroads of Three Continents”

- The Middle East is called the crossroads because the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa come together here.
Advanced cities:

- Sumerian city-states were protected by high walls.
- At the city center was a temple called a ziggurat.

These cities were considered advanced because of their large populations and organization.
## Lasting Contributions

### Specialized Workers:
- At the top of society were priests, and then kings.
- In the middle were skilled workers, like merchants.
- At the bottom, were common farmers & slaves.

### Advanced Cities
- Cities had central temples called ziggurats.

### Complex Institutions
- Priests and then kings ran the cities.
- Rulers created written law codes.

### Record Keeping and Writing
- Cuneiform was the world's first system of writing.

### Advanced Technology
- Sumerians invented the wheel, the sail, and the plow, and discovered how to make bronze.
Religion: The Sumerians

The ziggurat was a religious structure or temple where sacrifices to the gods were made.

Sumerians believed people were just the servants of the gods.
Lasting Contributions

■ Writing:
  – Sumerians made the world's 1st writing called cuneiform
  – Phoenicians simplified cuneiform to a 22-letter alphabet
  – Phoenician merchants spread the alphabet throughout the Mediterranean world
  – The alphabet influenced Greek, Latin, & English

Mesopotamia

| ABCDEFGHJLMPQSRUVWY
| IJKLMNOPYZ
| X |
| Omega |
| Psi |
| Z |

and the plow, and discovered how to make bronze.
The Story of Gilgamesh is similar in that it includes a tale of a global flood to punish man for his wrongdoings. Sound familiar?
Lasting Contributions

Government:

- Babylonian King Hammurabi created the first legal code.
- Hammurabi's Code had 282 laws based on justice & retaliation (an eye for an eye).
- The code had different punishments for the various levels of society.

The code was written for all to see and know.
Lasting Contributions

Advanced Cities
- Cities had central temples called ziggurats.

Specialized Workers
- Priests, warriors, scribes, artisans, and farmers all had special tasks.

Complex Institutions
- Priests and then kings ran the cities.
- Rulers created written law codes.

Record Keeping and Writing
- Cuneiform was the world's first system of writing.

Advanced Technology
- Sumerians invented the wheel, the sail, and the plow, and discovered how to make bronze.

8. If a man has stolen an ox, a sheep, a pig, or a boat that belonged to a temple or palace, he shall repay thirty times its cost. If it belonged to a private citizen, he shall repay ten times. If the thief cannot pay, he shall be put to death.

142. If a woman hates her husband and says to him "You cannot be with me," the authorities in her district will investigate the case. If she has been chaste and without fault, even though her husband has neglected or belittled her, she will be held innocent and may return to her father's house.

143. If the woman is at fault, she shall be thrown into the river.

196. If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.

198. If he puts out the eye of a freed man or break the bone of a free man, he shall pay one gold mina.

199. If he put out the eye of a man's slave, or break the bone of a man's slave, he shall pay one-half of its value.

CODE OF HAMMURABI, adapted from a translation by L. W. King
# Lasting Contributions

## Technology:

- Sumerians inventions include the wheel, sail, plow, & bronze metalwork.
Closure Activity

- Develop a “Hammurabi’s Code” for Churchville’s Ninth Grade Academy:
  - Your code should include at least 5 laws and consequences
  - Think about things that are important to keep order in a school