

Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Early Neolithic Cities Reading

A Large Neolithic Town

Catal Huyuk was a large Neolithic town located in what is today the country of Turkey. Archaeological excavations tell a lot about the lifestyle of the people who lived in this town.

Around 6,000 B.C.E., the town covered about 32 acres and had about 1,000 mud brick houses. There were no streets in the town. Instead the doors of buildings opened onto rooftops. People walked across rooftops and up and down ladders to get from place to place.

Most houses had two rooms. One of these rooms was used to store food. The other room had kitchen and living areas. Built – in platforms served as tables, benches, and beds. Archaeologist have found human remains buried under some of these platforms, which suggests that family members were often buried within the family home to watch over and guard the living family members. Some of the buildings in the town were probably **shrines** where people worshiped. These were decorated with paintings and sculptures. The people raised wheat and cattle. They did some hunting and gathering. There was also some industry, and craftspeople made such things as stone tools, wooden bowls, reed baskets, and woolen cloth. The people of Catal Huyuk were quite **self-sufficient**.

❖ What kind of lifestyle did people have in Catal Huyuk, and how do we know?

Trade in the Neolithic World

Catal Huyuk was a center for trade. The people who lived there made things that people of other settlements wanted. For example, Catal Huyuk had obsidian, a black volcanic glass that was highly valued throughout the Middle East. Obsidian was used to make tools with extremely sharp edges. Sometimes the people of Catal Huyuk traded just the obsidian. Sometimes they traded the tools they made from it.

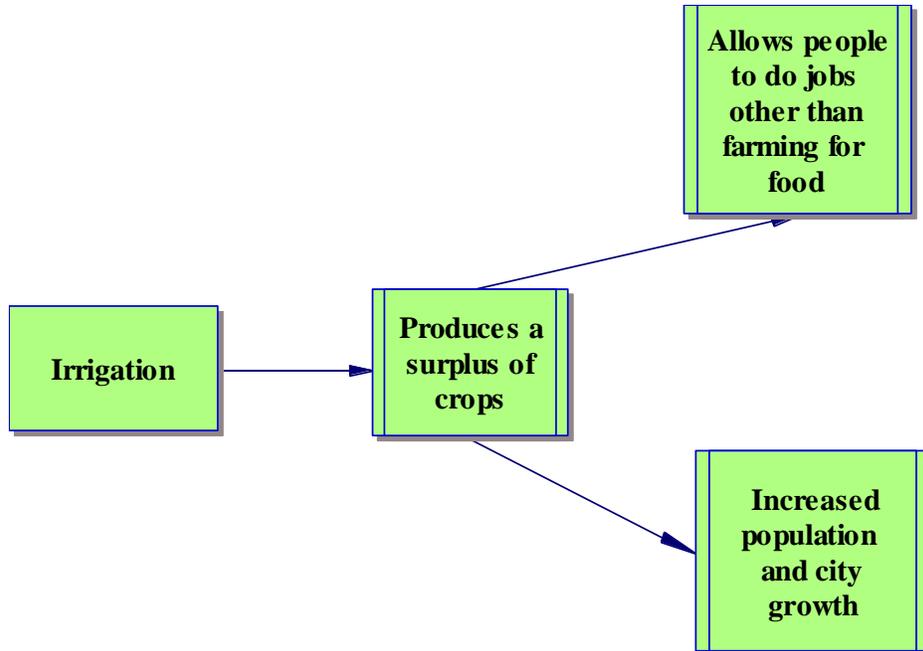
Another Middle East town that was involved in trade was Umm Dabaghiyah. This was a small settlement with fewer than 10 houses. But Umm Dabaghiyah had other buildings – long, narrow structures with rows of cell-like rooms. Archaeologists think that these rooms were used for storage, and that Umm Dabaghiyah was a hunting and trading outpost.

The people of Umm Dabaghiyah hunted for onagers, which were wild animals that looked like donkeys. Hunters chased the onagers into traps, skinned them, and traded their hides. The soil around Umm Dabaghiyah was not good for farming, so the townspeople were not self-sufficient. But they did have more onager hides than they could use. They traded the hides for things they could not produce themselves.

- ❖ What was the surplus item produced at Umm Dabaghiyah, and how did the people make use of it?

A City on the Plain

The city of Ur was located on the dry plain near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. In order to farm the land, the people of Ur used canals, ditches, and pipes to get the water from the rivers to the dry land. With the help of **irrigation**, the farmers of Ur could grow barley, wheat, vegetables, date palms, and grapevines. They even produced a surplus of food. This surplus prevented **famine**. It also allowed some of the people to do jobs other than farming. As a result of irrigation farming, the population of Ur grew rapidly.



- ❖ How did irrigation make it possible for a city to grow in the land around the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers?

Features of an Early Neolithic City

There are several characteristics of a city besides a large population. One characteristic is organization and strong leadership. The people of Ur had to be organized to build their irrigation system. They also had to be organized to build their large public buildings – including a type of temple tower called a ziggurat.

People in cities are also employed in many different jobs. A tablet found at Ur showed that people’s jobs included chisel workers, gem cutters, and metal workers. Ur also had judges, doctors, and musicians.

Cities also usually had different social groups. Items taken from burial tombs showed that Ur had three level of society:

- Government officials, priests, and soldiers.
- Merchants, teachers, laborers, farmers, and craftspeople.
- Slaves

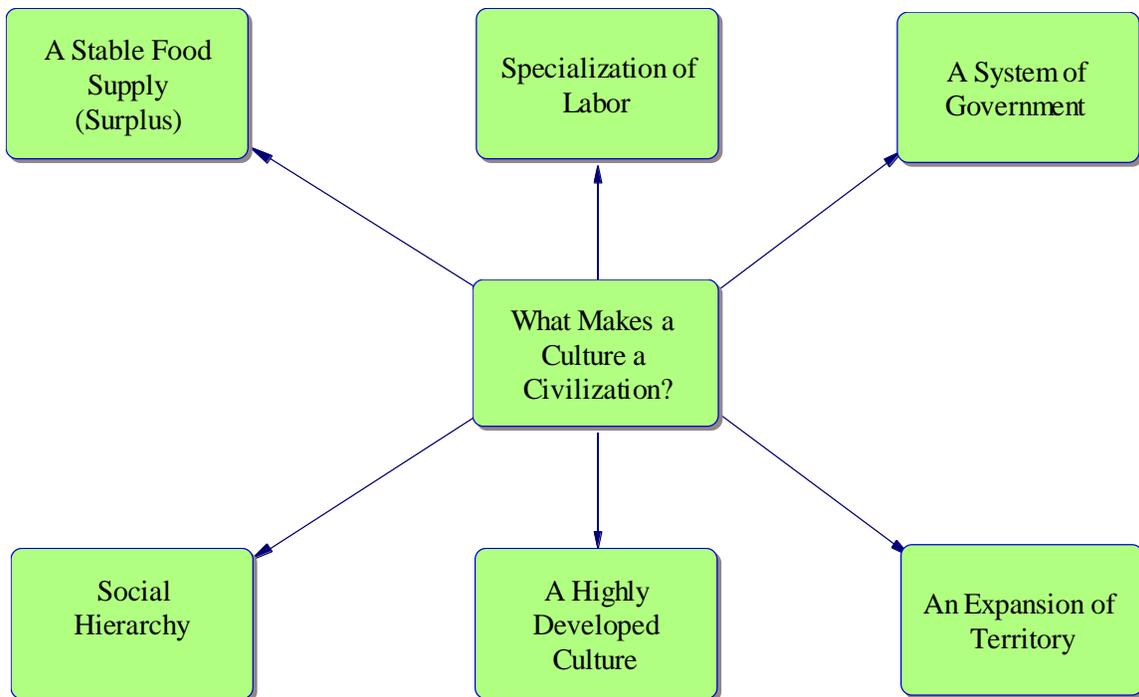
Long-distance trade is another sign of a city. Ur was located on a sun-baked plain, hundreds of miles from valuable resources. So trade was necessary for the city’s survival. Priests kept records of goods that flowed in and out of the city.

- ❖ What archaeological evidence tells us that Ur was a city?

An Early Civilization

Ur and other cities around the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were part of the world's earliest **civilizations**. There are six characteristics that made them civilizations:

- A Stable Food Supply
- Specialization of Labor
- A System of Government
- Social Levels
- A Highly Developed Culture of Art, Religion, Music, Law, Etc.
- An Expansion of Territory



❖ What are the six characteristics of a civilization?

Vocabulary

- 1.) Shrine: A place where people worship, usually containing a sacred object.
- 2.) Self-sufficient: Able to provide for oneself without the help of others.
- 3.) Irrigation: The act of supplying dry lands with water.
- 4.) Famine: A widespread shortage of food that threatens death.
- 5.) Civilization: A society with a food supply, specialized jobs, a government, and a highly developed culture.