



Water Without Rain

The plain that became Mesopotamia was good farmland. The rivers carried soil down from the mountains. There was a long season of sunshine. There was only one problem. There was hardly any rain. Plants need water to grow.

There was plenty of water in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Sumerian farmers learned to dig ditches and make water flow into the thirsty fields. The result was almost magical. Enough wheat and barley thrived in the warmth of the desert sun to feed hundreds of people. This was one of the first uses of irrigation in the world.



With irrigation, farming became easier. People had time to learn new skills. Some made pottery for carrying water, storing seed, and preparing food. Others made better tools for digging, planting, and harvesting.

1. Why was the land on the plains good for farming?

2. How did irrigation make cities possible?

3. Name three ways farmers could use pottery.

4. Name three modern tools you would use for digging, planting, or harvesting vegetables in a garden.

For Info Archaeologists: Use reference sources to dig up the answers to these questions:

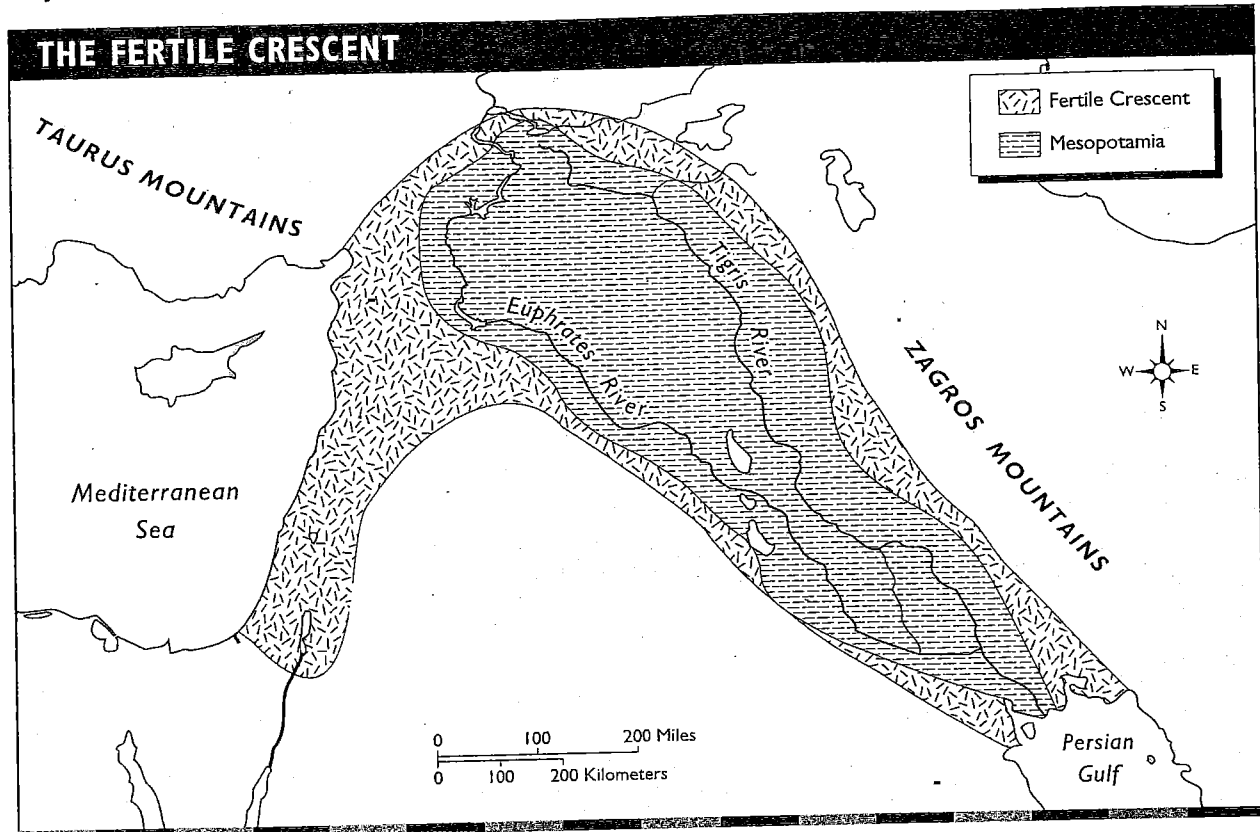
5. What tools did Mesopotamians use to make farming easier?

6. Find at least one problem caused by irrigation.



Geography of the Fertile Crescent

Use the map below to answer the questions. For help, refer to pages 54 to 57 in your textbook.



1. What two important rivers are shown on the map?

2. Where do the rivers begin?

3. Into what body of water do these rivers flow?

4. In ancient times what civilization developed between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers?

5. What made the Fertile Crescent good for farming?
