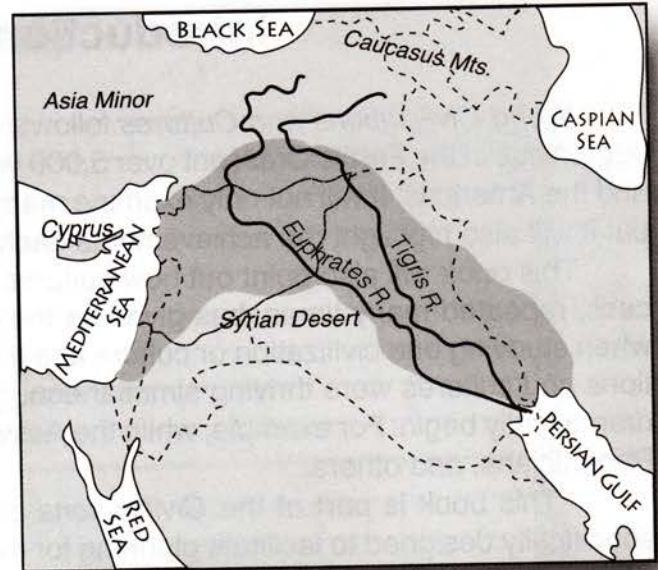


The Fertile Crescent

Fertile Crescent

The term "**Fertile Crescent**" refers to an area in the Middle East where the earliest known civilizations of the world began. The area got its name because the soil is fertile, or rich, and the region is shaped like a crescent. Like a huge arch, the Fertile Crescent covers an area from the Persian Gulf through the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys and along the Mediterranean Sea. Some people refer to the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent as Mesopotamia. The western part of the Fertile Crescent is sometimes referred to as the Mediterranean section.



Nomads Settle in the Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent was an ideal place for **nomadic** people to settle, build cities, and eventually develop civilizations. Sheep, goats, and various kinds of grains were found in abundance in the wild. With a permanent food source, there was no need to move around to find food. It was easier to grow crops in the rich soil and to raise animals for food. People living in the Fertile Crescent were able to grow more crops than they could eat and raise more animals than they needed, so they could **trade** the excess crops and animals with others. As trading increased, the population grew, and the people needed to develop laws, keep records, and invent ways to deal with their new way of life. There was a need for a written language, mathematics, laws, medicine, **agriculture**, and other developments because of the many people living close to one another.

The First Civilizations Develop

When humans changed their lifestyle from hunters and fishers to farmers about 5,000 years ago in the Fertile Crescent, the developments and inventions that came from this change helped to develop the world's first **civilizations**. These civilizations have affected world history tremendously, not only in social and business areas, but in religion as well. Many of the great religions that exist in the world today had their beginnings in the area known as the Fertile Crescent.



Later Civilizations

The Fertile Crescent was not only the home of the first civilizations, but also the area where many later civilizations were developed. Some of the civilizations that developed in the Fertile Crescent were the Assyrians, Sumerians, Canaanites, Philistines, Phoenicians/Carthaginians, Akkadians, Hittites, Babylonians, Egyptians, Israelites, and others.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Knowledge Check

Matching

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Fertile Crescent | a. farming; growing crops and raising livestock |
| _____ 2. nomadic | b. moving from place to place with no permanent home |
| _____ 3. trade | c. an arch-shaped area in the Middle East from the Persian Gulf through the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys and along the Mediterranean Sea |
| _____ 4. agriculture | d. a high level of cultural and technological development, especially when systems of writing and record-keeping have been created |
| _____ 5. civilization | e. exchanging goods or services with other people |

Multiple Choice

6. The eastern part of the Fertile Crescent is sometimes called

a. the Mediterranean.	b. Mesopotamia.
c. Asia Minor.	d. Egypt.
7. What was one food source that was NOT available to the nomadic people in the Fertile Crescent?

a. sheep	b. grains
c. potatoes	d. goats
8. Why were people able to begin trading with others in the area?

a. They had extra food.	b. They ate everything they grew.
c. They spent all their time farming.	d. They lived close to one another.
9. Which civilization was NOT developed in the Fertile Crescent?

a. Sumerians	b. Israelites
c. Minoans	d. Akkadians

Constructed Response

10. What parts of a civilization developed as people in the Fertile Crescent began to grow more crops and raise more animals than they needed for themselves? Use details from the reading selection to help support your answer.
