Ancient Sumer

I. Ancient Sumer
   A. The rise of Sumerian city-states began around 3500 B.C.
   B. In the mid-19th century, archaeologists began finding artifacts in the area of the Fertile Crescent that we call Mesopotamia
   C. By studying artifacts, archaeologists have been able to learn a lot about Sumer

II. Characteristics of Civilization
   A. Civilization: a society marked by developed arts, sciences, government, and social structure
   B. Characteristics that make a society into a civilization
      1. A rise in cities; a stable food supply, to ensure that the people of a society have the food they need to survive
      2. A social structure with different social levels
      3. A system of government, to ensure that life in the society is orderly
      4. A religious system, which involves both a set of beliefs and forms of worship
      5. A highly developed way of life that includes the arts, such as painting, architecture, music, and literature
      6. Job specialization and advances in technology
      7. A highly developed written language
      8. Public works that benefited the city, such as irrigation systems, canals and bridges
   C. Social structure: social structure: the way a civilization is organized
   D. Technology: the use of tools and other inventions for practical purposes

III. Stable Food Supply
   A. Civilizations need a stable food supply
   B. Sumerians invented two key things to help them create a stable food supply
      1. Complex irrigation systems
      2. The plow

IV. Social Structure
   A. Civilizations have a complex organization (social structure)
   B. Several classes of people lived in Sumer
      1. Top level: priests, landowners, and government officials
      2. Middle level: merchants, artisans, farmers and fishers
      3. Bottom level: slaves
   C. Merchants: a person who makes money by selling goods
   D. Artisans: a craftsperson

V. Government
   A. All civilizations have a system of government to direct people’s behavior and make life orderly
B. Sumerian city-states were ruled by kings
C. Sumerian kings enforced the laws and collected taxes
D. A king also led his city-state’s army
E. Kings appointed officials to help with certain duties
F. Scribe: a person who writes

VI. Religion
A. All civilizations have some kind of religious system
B. In Sumer, religious beliefs influenced every part of daily life
C. The ancient Sumerians expressed their religious beliefs by constructing temples and religious towers called ziggurats
D. Ziggurats: an ancient Mesopotamian temple tower with outside staircases and a shrine at the top
E. The Sumerians had many kinds of religious ceremonies

VII. The Arts
A. All civilizations have a highly developed culture, including the arts
B. Culture: a characteristic of civilization that includes the beliefs and behaviors of a society or group of people
C. There were many kinds of artists and artisans in ancient Sumer
D. Music was another important art in Sumer

VIII. Technology
A. All civilizations create new forms of technology
B. Most important Sumerian invention was the wheel
C. Another technological advance was the arch

IX. Writing
A. A final characteristic of civilizations is a highly developed written language
B. Sumerians created a written language called cuneiform
C. Cuneiform: writing that uses wedge-shaped characters
D. Cuneiform was based on an earlier, simpler form of writing that used pictographs
E. Pictograph: a symbol that stands for an object