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### Academic ESL- World History: Mesopotamia Assignment

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OER ESL 86: UNIT 1- READING, WRITING AND LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

**I. MESOPOTAMIA: Land between the Rivers**

BEFORE YOU READ:

- a. Watch the video- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ki8S5I83Ccc>. (If the video is not available, move to the step.)
- b. Take down keywords and short notes in the box below. Don't write in full sentences.

**What does the video say about:** hunting and gathering, the role of water, farming, staying in one place, the wheel, writing and other inventions, social organization and religion?

**c. Summary:**

Watch the video a second time. Look at your notes and write down everything you remember from the video. Write at least 10 sentences.

**II. Mesopotamia - The Rise of the Cities**

**(Read: <https://www.ancient.eu/article/678/mesopotamia-the-rise-of-the-cities/>)**

- a. Consider the word "rise". Explain the meaning in your own words and think of at least three synonyms.

- b. Read the quote. Try to explain the meaning of the text written in bold.

*“This was a revolutionary moment in human history. The [Sumerians] were consciously aiming at nothing less than changing the world. **They were the very first to adopt the principle that has driven progress** and advancement throughout history, and still motivates most of us in the modern times: the conviction that **it is humanity’s right, its mission and its destiny, to transform and improve on nature and become her master (20).**”*

- c. Underline important concepts as you read the second quote.

*“From before 4,000 BCE, over the next ten to fifteen centuries, the people of Eridu and their neighbors laid the foundations for almost everything that we know as civilization. It has been called the **Urban Revolution**, though the invention of cities was actually the least of it. With the city came the centralized state, the hierarchy of social classes, the division of labour, organized religion, monumental building, civil engineering, **writing, literature, sculpture**, art, **music**, education, mathematics and **law**, not to mention a vast array of new inventions and discoveries, from items as basic as wheeled vehicles and sailing boats to the potter’s kiln, metallurgy and the creation of synthetic materials. And on top of all that was the huge collection of notions and ideas so fundamental to our way of looking at the world, like the concept of numbers, or weight, quite independent of actual items counted or weighed – the number ten, or one kilo – that we have long forgotten that they had to be discovered or invented. Southern Mesopotamia was the place where all that was first achieved (20-21).”*

- d. Discuss with a partner. Based on what you know so far, what would make humans move from living a rural to an urban life? And what do you think changed?

- e. Look up the following vocabulary. Find a synonym.

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Synonym</b>
primordial	
realm	
Be surrounded by	
social upheaval	
to imbue	

rural	
Urban, urbanization	
To reject	
To range from - to	

- f. Some of the facts about the world and our history are proven facts that don't change. However, historical research, new discoveries and ability to find and interpret sources, often change our knowledge about the world. As you read the text "Mesopotamia: The Rise of Cities" focus on "what is a fact" or what is "maybe a fact". This is an important distinction when you engage in academic activities, be it just reading a text for class, or writing a more complex paper.

**Read the text and listen to the audio while you read.** You can stop and relisten as you move along in the text. Take notes. Fill in what you consider the main idea for each paragraph. Write down a quote for each main idea, then explain the quote in your own words. Then discuss your findings with a partner.

