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1. What are some of the difficulties in using ancient writing as historical evidence?

2. What do different writing materials—clay tablets, bones, bamboo, etc.—reveal about the respective culture that used them?

3. How did historians of the eighteenth century define “civilization,” and what lasting problems has this created?

4. How did Sumer's geography influence the religious system created there?

5. How did a hereditary kingship and aristocracy develop in Sumer?

6. What factors helped Sargon and Hammurabi create some of the first empires?

7. What geographical factors shaped Egyptian civilization?

8. Describe the complex role of the pharaoh in Egyptian politics and religion.

9. Describe the relationship between Egypt and Nubia.

10. Explain why the Persians created a system of roads and how these roads benefited their empire.

11. Describe some of the changes brought to Mesopotamian societies by the introduction of sustained agriculture.

12. Mesopotamia and Egypt were both sites of ancient civilizations. Describe each civilization in terms of its political structure, religion, society, and culture. How can we account for the similarities and differences between them?

13. Explain the differences and similarities between Phoenician, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian writing systems. Why was writing important to the development of each of these civilizations?

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14. How did the worship of Yahweh by the Hebrews compare with how the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and Persians worshiped their gods?

15. Explain the roles of women in Egyptian and Hebrew societies. Discuss similarities and differences.

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Answer Key

1. *Answer would ideally include:*

   The answer should discuss the difficulties in translation and in discovering the meaning behind written symbols. Many of the works survive only in copies of the original, and these copies might have been corrupted or changed in transcription. Additionally, because only texts that were at some point deemed important would have been copied multiple times—documents referring to political or military events, records of religious traditions, or writing from individuals achieving notoriety—what survives today is a very selective sample of writing from any historical period. Written documents dealing with everyday life—particularly women's texts—are much rarer.
2. *Answer would ideally include:*

   The material used presents historians with much information about what materials were available to a culture locally and sometimes indicates something of the trade relations between cultures. Some writing materials are more “permanent” than others, so the kind of material used will also determine how much writing survives. Sometimes the permanence was intended (inscriptions in stone), and sometimes it was accidental (clay tablets that hardened).
3. *Answer would ideally include:*

   Eighteenth-century historians defined civilizations as societies with large-scale and complex organizations of law, politics, economics, and culture. This definition has created the concept of civilization as a natural progression from simple to complex. The earliest places that writing and cities developed were referred to as the “cradle of civilization.” These ideas also led to the assumption that all societies must go through the same stages and that any society that developed in a different way was therefore less advanced or less valued. This perspective resulted in a privileging of the Western model of societal development over other regional models.
4. *Answer would ideally include:*

   The geography of Sumer, as with all of Mesopotamia, made for an unpredictable climate. The Sumerians perceived violent flooding, extreme droughts, and other dangerous weather conditions as punishments meted out by mercurial and easily angered gods. Therefore, they used gifts and prayers as a means to appease the gods and maintain order.
5. *Answer would ideally include:*

   When Sumerian city-states faced military or environmental threats, they often turned to priests or military leaders to defend city walls against invaders or mobilize armies against the elements. Gradually these leaders became permanent and tried to establish hereditary dynasties; some formed alliances with other warriors, who also created dynasties. Power thus became hereditary.
6. *Answer would ideally include:*

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Both kings unified Mesopotamia by creating standing armies that could be used for both defense and conquest and formed alliances with other rulers when necessary. Sargon appointed family members to serve as religious administrators. Hammurabi also used religious justifications for his power, by claiming that his code came from his god. Both promoted uniform administration and trade within their city-states and with other cities.

7. *Answer would ideally include:*

   Egyptian civilization was shaped by the Nile River, although a particularly good answer might also mention the deserts. The Nile provided a path for communication and trade, as well as water to irrigate crops. The deserts protected Egypt from invasion. The predictability of the Nile's flooding helped to create stability in the Egyptian state. The Nile was viewed as a creative and comforting force.
8. *Answer would ideally include:*

   The pharaoh was seen as a living god-king and served as the focus of religious and political life during the Old Kingdom period (2660–2180 B.C.E.). He was one of many gods honored by the polytheistic Egyptians. One of his chief roles was to control the Nile's rise and fall. He was also responsible for the integration between the gods and humans. Like other humans, he was expected to have an afterlife. As a king, however, his afterlife needed the trappings of a king, which gave rise to the pyramids.
9. *Answer would ideally include:*

   The relationship between Egypt and Nubia was based on political control and trade. From Nubia, Egypt acquired ivory, gold, ebony, and other products from sub-Saharan Africa. During the New Kingdom, Egypt took over northern Nubia and introduced Egyptian religion and culture. In 727 B.C.E., the Nubian kingdom of Kush conquered Egypt and ruled there until the Kushites were driven out by the Assyrians in the seventh century B.C.E.
10. *Answer would ideally include:*

    The Persians built roads to aid trade and communication throughout the large empire. Roads linked the capital of Persepolis to all parts of the empire and made it easier for Persian rulers to administer to all parts of the empire and move troops for defense. The flow of trade encouraged further development and connection to the Red Sea and Nile River.
11. *Answer would ideally include:*

    Sustained agriculture in Mesopotamia required the building of irrigation canals for the crops, and thus required people to settle and defend one location. A division of labor followed. The concentration of populations led to the development of cities, with defensive walls, marketplaces, and public gathering sites such as assembly areas and temples. The emergent class system privileged priests, and a writing system was created to keep accounts.
12. *Answer would ideally include:*

    For politics, this description should include governmental organization, political and

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geographic unity, the role of the military, and the role of the priesthood. For religion, it should include the role and power of the priesthood, types and attitudes of the gods, and view of the afterlife. For society, it should address social structure, slavery, family, and gender. The description of culture should include such things as art and folktales. The similarities and differences between each should be explained based on such factors as historical development and geography.

13. *Answer would ideally include:*

    Phoenician scribes produced the first completely phonetic (i.e., sound-based) system of writing. At the core of this system was the first alphabet, which served as a foundation for many Western writing systems, including Greek and Roman. Scribes in Mesopotamia and Egypt did incorporate some symbols that represented sounds, but these were always used as part of a much larger system of ideograms. Answers should include some information on each specific writing system and, in the second part of the question, information on the importance of writing to religion, commerce, laws, and government administration.

14. *Answer would ideally include:*

    The essay will probably start with the most obvious difference in how the four religions thought about gods—that the Hebrews are monotheistic and believe that Yahweh is the only god, whereas the other three religions are polytheistic and worship many different gods. Although all four religions incorporate animal sacrifice in worship, the Hebrews also worship their god through their treatment of one another, following a specified moral code.

15. *Answer would ideally include:*

    Good essays will find that women in both societies had domestic obligations and economic opportunities. Most will note that women were never viewed as being as important as men. Some will likely mention the unusual role of Hatshepsut. Good essays will also compare the importance of marriage and fertility. While women in Egypt were frequently portrayed as companions to men, women in Hebrew society had a particularly important role in educating their children.

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Use the following to answer questions 1-10:

A) Period beginning about 1100 B.C.E. when iron became the most important material for weapons and tools in some parts of the world.
B) All-powerful god of the Hebrew people and the basis for the enduring religious traditions of Judaism.
C) Sumerian form of writing; the term describes the wedge-shaped marks made by a stylus.
D) Religion based on the teachings of Zoroaster that emphasized the individual's responsibility to choose between good and evil.
E) An oral or written narration of the achievements and sometimes the failures of heroes that embodies peoples' ideas about themselves.
F) A large family of languages that includes English, most of the languages of modern Europe, ancient Greek, Latin, Persian, Hindi, Bengali, and Sanskrit, the sacred tongue of ancient India.
G) The worship of many gods and goddesses.
H) People of the prosperous city-states in what is now Lebanon who traded and founded colonies throughout the Mediterranean and spread the phonetic alphabet.
I) The title given to the king of Egypt in the New Kingdom, from a word that meant “great house.”
J) A proclamation issued by Babylonian king Hammurabi to establish laws regulating many aspects of life.

1. cuneiform

2. epic poem

3. Hammurabi's law code

4. polytheism

5. Indo-European languages

6. Iron Age

7. Yahweh

8. Zoroastrianism

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9. Phoenicians

10. pharaoh

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Answer Key

1. C
2. E
3. J
4. G
5. F
6. A
7. B
8. D
9. H
10. I

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1. What material was used for writing in Mesopotamia?
   A) Animal bones
   B) Papyrus
   C) Soft clay
   D) Parchment

2. How did papyrus compare with clay tablets as a writing material?
   A) It was less prone to disintegration.
   B) It was more fragile and less likely to survive.
   C) It required a stylus to carve the symbols.
   D) It was more difficult to write on.

3. In general, how did residents of ancient cities tend to view residents of rural areas?
   A) City dwellers viewed themselves as more sophisticated.
   B) City dwellers saw themselves as equal to the farmers.
   C) City dwellers looked up to and envied those who lived in the country.
   D) City dwellers tried to imitate the people of the rural areas.

4. What method did early states use to control their populace?
   A) Exemption from taxation
   B) Promises of wealth
   C) Threats of violence
   D) Offers of free food

5. Social hierarchies in early states were usually heightened by the introduction of what state mechanism?
   A) Written laws
   B) Economic records
   C) Written religious texts
   D) Coinage

6. In what region did the first known states develop?
   A) Egypt
   B) India
   C) Persia
   D) Mesopotamia

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7. Sustained agriculture in Sumer relied on which of the following?
   A) Naturally occurring irrigation ditches that helped water the crops
   B) Man-made irrigation systems
   C) Constant annual rainfall that irrigated the fields
   D) An abundance of labor to work the fields

8. What role did the first rulers of Ur, Uruk, and other Sumerian city-states play?
   A) Priests
   B) Merchants
   C) Farmers
   D) Scribes

9. Where did Sumerians build their largest temples?
   A) On the outskirts of the cities
   B) In the middle of crop fields
   C) On man-made islands in the river
   D) In the center of the city

10. What surrounded Sumerian temples?
   A) Forests
   B) Barren land
   C) The king's palace
   D) The houses of ordinary citizens

11. Which of these is considered the world's first city?
   A) Athens
   B) Uruk
   C) Babylon
   D) Judea

12. To counter the temples' power, military leaders who became kings began to build what kinds of structures?
   A) Rival temples to worship war gods
   B) Public cemeteries to honor war dead as heroes
   C) Palaces to demonstrate the king's strength
   D) Marketplaces to highlight goods from conquered territories

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13. Who were known as “clients” in Sumer?
    A) Free people who were dependent on the nobility
    B) Household slaves
    C) Destitute persons supported by the city temple
    D) Indentured servants who had contracts with local nobles

14. Who worked the land owned by the king, nobles, and temples in ancient Sumer?
    A) Hired laborers
    B) Priests in training
    C) Client farmers and slaves
    D) Scribes and soldiers

15. Why did older men have the most power in the Mesopotamian social system?
    A) Mesopotamian societies were patriarchal.
    B) The most important value in Mesopotamian society was reverence for elders.
    C) Older men tended to form political alliances with powerful priests.
    D) Older men presided over important ancestor-worship rituals.

16. Which of the following describes the earliest Sumerian writings?
    A) They were ideograms in which each sign symbolized an idea.
    B) They were pictographs in which each sign pictured an object.
    C) Each symbol represented a sound in the spoken language.
    D) They were written using the first known alphabet.

17. How did Sumerian scribes learn the cuneiform writing system?
    A) They were taught at special schools.
    B) They were taught at home by their fathers.
    C) They were taught by priests, who were solely responsible for this important teaching.
    D) They were taught as part of their mandated training as members of the army.

18. Sumerian scribes were trained largely to do what?
    A) To record religious texts and ritual manuals
    B) To write tax documents and legal cases
    C) To write official histories of royal families
    D) To keep property and wealth records

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19. What is the key theme of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*?
    A) The duty of a soldier to serve the king
    B) The constant battle between good and evil
    C) The idea that men and women were created by magic
    D) Humanity's search for immortality

20. The Sumerian mathematical system was based on units of sixty, ten, and six and survives in what modern system?
    A) Calculus
    B) Musical notation
    C) Time measurement
    D) Square roots

21. Around 2300 B.C.E., what chieftain conquered Sumer and created an empire?
    A) Hammurabi
    B) Menes
    C) Akhenaten
    D) Sargon

22. How did Sargon reinforce his rule in Mesopotamia?
    A) He converted all the people to his Semitic religion.
    B) He tore down the defensive walls of major cities and appointed his own sons as rulers.
    C) He wrote the first law code.
    D) He claimed to be a descendant of the god Marduk.

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23. According to Map 2.1, "Spread of Cultures in Southwest Asia and the Nile Valley, ca. 3000–1640 B.C.E.," which major geographic feature did Egypt and Mesopotamia have in common?



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A) Major rivers that facilitated trade and communication
B) The Mediterranean Sea
C) Marshlands that often restricted human travel
D) Neolithic sites

24. What was the intended function of Hammurabi's code?
A) To regulate the relationships among his people and promote their welfare
B) To intimidate the common people in order to prevent social upheaval
C) To protect the position of nobles and priests at the expense of the commoners
D) To increase the nobility's power over the priesthood

25. According to Hammurabi's code, who controlled a woman's dowry after she married?
A) A judge
B) The woman's husband
C) The woman's father
D) The woman herself

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26. What geographic feature had the largest impact on Egyptian culture and prosperity?
    A) The Sinai Desert
    B) The Nile River
    C) The Red Sea
    D) The Mediterranean Sea

27. How did Egyptians view the afterlife?
    A) As bleak and very frightening
    B) As pleasant
    C) As a place of punishment
    D) As a fictional realm that nonetheless inspired great wonder

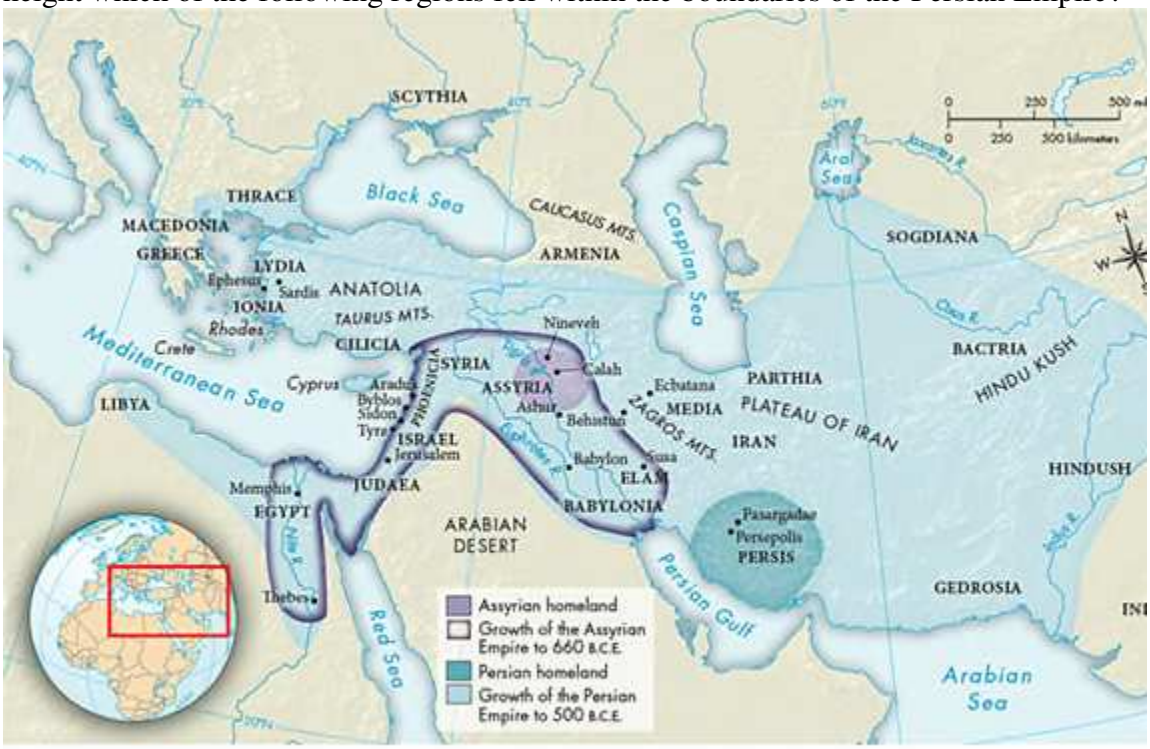
28. According to Egyptian belief, the Nile's rise and fall was dictated by
    A) tides.
    B) Ra.
    C) the pharaoh.
    D) priests.

29. One of the earliest deities Egyptians worshiped was Amon, god of
    A) the sun.
    B) the underworld.
    C) the dead.
    D) fertility.

30. For which of the following was a pharaoh believed to be responsible?
    A) Achieving integration between gods and humans
    B) Ruling over earth and sky
    C) Ensuring his people's safe passage to the afterlife
    D) Organizing Egypt's agricultural system

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31. According to Map 2.3, "The Assyrian and Persian Empires, ca. 1000–500 B.C.E.," at its height which of the following regions fell within the boundaries of the Persian Empire?

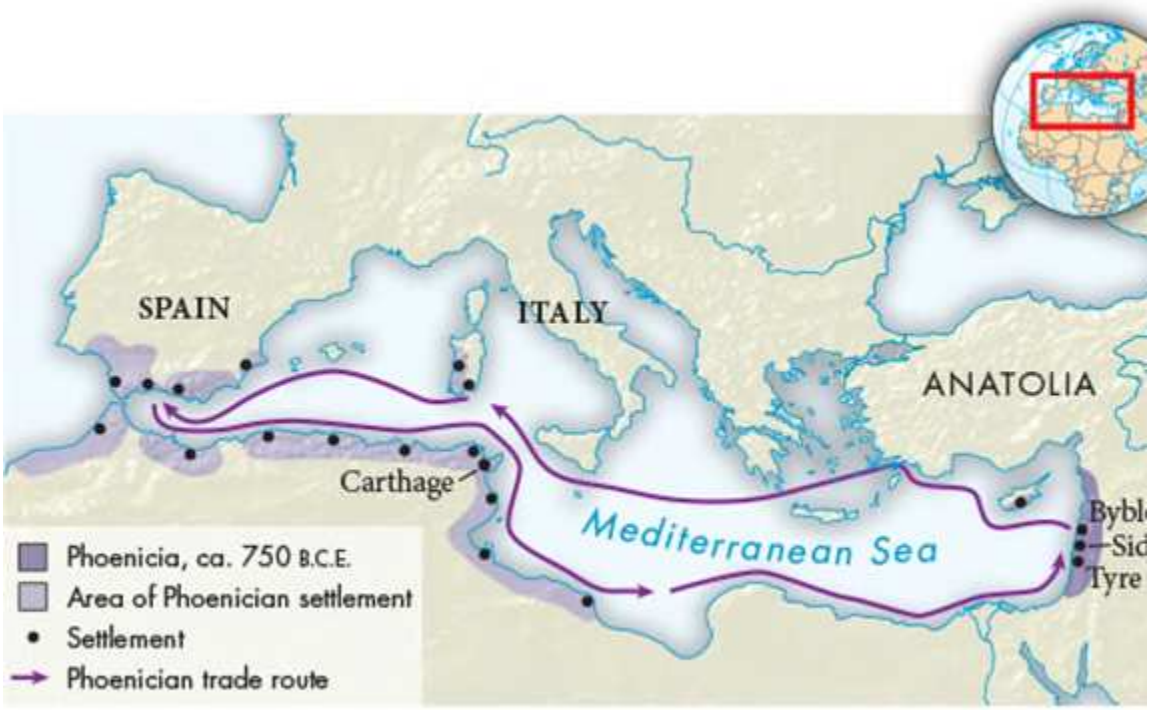


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A) Greece
B) Macedonia
C) The Arabian Peninsula
D) Mesopotamia

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32. Based upon the trade and settlement patterns of the Phoenicians in the map "Phoenician Settlements in the Mediterranean," which of the following is true?

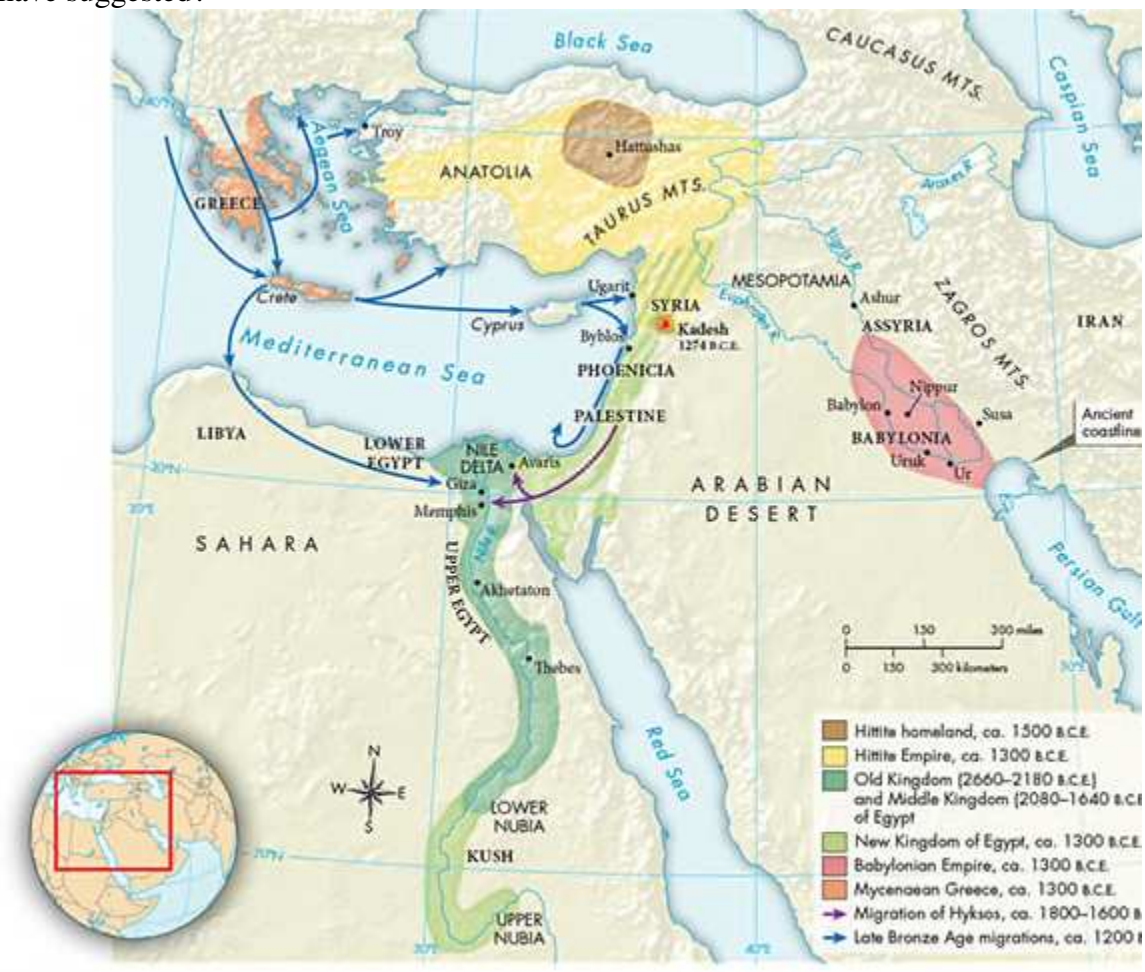


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A) Their voyages brought them into contact with the Babylonians.
B) They were master shipbuilders.
C) The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were vital to their trade routes.
D) They likely never encountered Egyptians.

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33. According to Map 2.2, "Empires and Migrations in the Eastern Mediterranean," which of the following would have made Egypt a difficult region to invade, as some historians have suggested?



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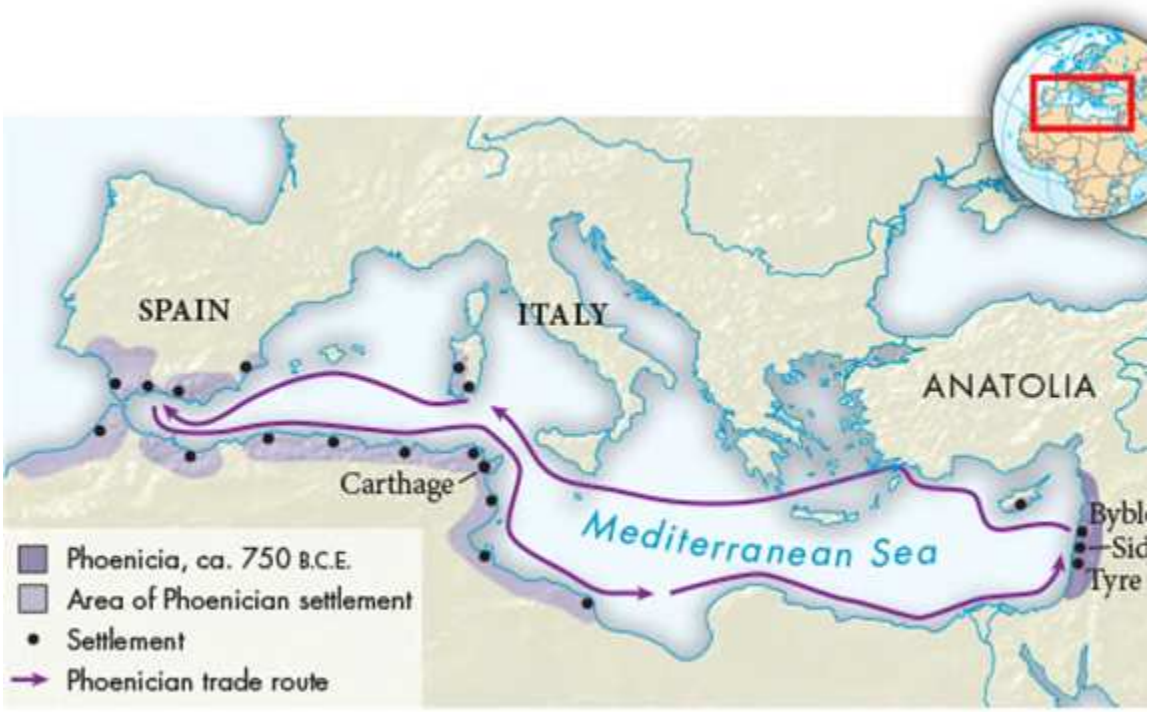
A) The deserts surrounded the narrow swath of land occupied by the kingdom.
B) The Nile River cut straight through the heart of the kingdom.
C) The Red Sea could make passage through much of the Arabian Desert especially difficult.
D) The waters of the Mediterranean Sea where it meets the Nile Delta were rough.

34. What important contribution did the Hyksos make to Egyptian society?
A) They encouraged Egyptians to worship the god Amon.
B) Their bronze technology and weaponry was adopted by Egyptians.
C) As naval pioneers, they introduced the center-stern rudder to Egyptian ships.
D) Their mathematicians introduced the abacus to Egypt.

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35. How was the New Kingdom different from the previous Middle and Old Kingdoms?
    A) Pharaohs increasingly tried to ensure peace because they realized war was too expensive.
    B) In response to multiple social problems, pharaohs encouraged more religious activities.
    C) Egyptians now focused more on trade than on farming because the Nile became unpredictable.
    D) Egyptians now focused more on conquest of new territories and created the first Egyptian empire.

36. Based upon the map "Phoenician Settlements in the Mediterranean," the settlements at Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos were all situated in territory that was once part of which of the following?



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    A) Ancient Egypt
    B) Ancient Mesopotamia
    C) Greece
    D) Babylonia

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37. Why was Akhenaton's interest in worship of a new sun-god Aton ultimately a failure?
    A) The elaborate worship rituals were too confusing.
    B) The hated and corrupt priesthood endorsed it.
    C) It was imposed from above and failed to find a place among the people.
    D) It attempted to do away with worship of the widely popular sun-god.

38. Why did the Hittites and Egyptians conclude a peace treaty in 1258 B.C.E.?
    A) India
    B) Sumer
    C) Meroë
    D) Persia

39. In 727 B.C.E., King Piye conquered and unified Egypt from his home kingdom of
    A) Kush.
    B) Phoenicia.
    C) Persia.
    D) Babylonia.

40. What was the Phoenicians' greatest cultural achievement?
    A) They developed settled agriculture.
    B) They developed the first sun-based calendar.
    C) They created the first fully phonetic alphabet.
    D) They were responsible for the composition of *The Iliad.*

41. What remains our most important source of knowledge about ancient Jews?
    A) Archaeological excavations
    B) The Hebrew Bible
    C) Governmental records
    D) Oral epic histories

42. The Hebrews created a monarchy with Saul as leader by fighting what other Palestinian people in the eleventh century B.C.E.?
    A) Philistines
    B) Phoenicians
    C) Egyptians
    D) Assyrians

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43. Which Hebrew leader captured the city of Jerusalem?
    A) Judah
    B) David
    C) Saul
    D) Solomon

44. What happened to the Hebrew kingdom after Solomon's death?
    A) Its leaders continued to consolidate politically.
    B) Conflict led to its split into two separate kingdoms.
    C) The kingdom was largely destroyed by an internal power struggle.
    D) Leaders gained the military protection of the Assyrians.

45. How did the Hebrew religion change as a result of the Babylonian Captivity?
    A) It was redefined and established as the law of Yahweh.
    B) It almost disappeared.
    C) It was exposed to Zoroastrianism.
    D) It was adopted by the Chaldeans.

46. How were children educated in ancient Israel?
    A) Education was left up to the father.
    B) Education took place in organized schools.
    C) Boys and girls attended school at the local temple.
    D) Education was a responsibility of both parents.

47. Which of the following was true of the Assyrians?
    A) They were one of the most warlike people in history.
    B) They used shrewd diplomacy to carve out an empire.
    C) They united the small kingdoms of Phoenicia and the Jews to defeat Egypt.
    D) They were nomadic fighters who did not build or live in permanent towns.

48. In addition to his concept of empire, what was another characteristic that made Cyrus a remarkable warrior-king?
    A) His concern for economic development
    B) His effective assimilation of nomadic invaders into his kingdom
    C) His benevolence and humanity as a ruler
    D) His ability to coordinate an efficient bureaucracy over a vast region

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49. Which of the following was an important teaching of Zoroaster?
    A) Human actions were the result of manipulation by the gods.
    B) People possessed free will and were accountable for their actions.
    C) People's eternal fate was determined by the depth of their religious faith.
    D) All gods embodied good and truth, whereas only humans could be hateful or evil.

50. Which civilization produced some of the best iron products in the world?
    A) India
    B) Sumer
    C) Meroë
    D) Persia

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Answer Key

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. D
10. D
11. B
12. C
13. A
14. C
15. A
16. B
17. A
18. D
19. D
20. C
21. D
22. B
23. A
24. A
25. D
26. B
27. B
28. C
29. A
30. A
31. D
32. B
33. A
34. B
35. D
36. B
37. C
38. C
39. A
40. C
41. B
42. A
43. B
44. B

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45. A
46. D
47. A
48. C
49. B
50. C

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