1-2 Notes

* Civilization – complex society that includes: cities, organized gov’ts, art, religion, class divisions and a writing system.
* The first civilizations arose in the river valleys because of good farming conditions.
* The earliest-known civilization arose on a flat plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers – this land is called MESOPOTAMIA which means “land between the rivers”.
* Mesopotamia had a hot, dry climate with unpredictable floods.
* Farmers learned to IRRIGATE – a way of watering crops.
* City-state - a city and its surrounding land which had its own government and was not a part of a larger unit.
* Sumerians used river mud as their main building material.
* Sumerians believed in many gods.
* Each city-state had a ZIGGURAT – grand temple – the word means “mountain of god” or “hill of heaven”
* The first kings were probably war heroes.
* Most Sumerians were farmers. Some were ARTISANS – skilled workers who made metal products, cloth or pottery.
* Sumer had three Social Classes: (1) Upper class- kings, priests and gov’t officials (2) Middle class – artisans, merchants, farmers and fishers (this is the largest class) (3)Lower class – enslaved people
* Mesopotamia is considered the “cradle of civilization”
* Sumerians developed writing to keep records of business and other events. Their writing is called CUNIEFORM.
* Only boys from wealthy families learned to write and some became SCRIBES – record keepers.
* Sumerians were inventors! They invented: the wheel, plow, sailboat, a number system based on 60, and a 12 month calendar based on the moon.
* The king of the Akkadians was Sargon. He conquered ALL of Mesopotamia and created the world’s first EMPIRE-a group of many different lands under one ruler.
* King Hammurabi – king of Babylon who conquered Mesopotamia and more lands creating the Babylonian Empire.
* Hammurabi created a Code of Laws to rule his empire.
* An EPIC is a long poem that tells the story of a hero.
* The earliest known story written is the Epic of Gilgamesh.