

Inside Ancient Uruk

Find the features that make a community a civilization.

SS.6.W.2.3 "Identify the characteristics of civilization."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that show a characteristic of civilization. Number the seven different characteristics you find in the passage.

A Growing River City

- ① More than 5,000 years ago, people built the city of Uruk in southern Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Farmers used river water to irrigate fields of barley and dates. A steady food supply meant that not everyone had to farm. As the settlement grew, it became a city with crowded neighborhoods, markets, and large temples. Uruk shows that a civilization was more than a group of families living together near a river alone.
- ② Uruk's people organized work beyond the farm. Workers made pottery, cloth, tools, and bricks, while merchants traded goods. Priests led religious ceremonies in temples, and rulers directed workers and collected resources. Scribes pressed signs into wet clay tablets to keep records of grain, trade, and payments. This writing helped leaders manage a growing population. Different jobs, organized government, shared religious practices, and record keeping were important characteristics of civilization in places like Uruk long ago.
- ③ Life in Uruk was not the same for every person. Farmers, craft workers, merchants, priests, scribes, and rulers had different roles and amounts of power. Leaders could organize people to build canals and city walls. Canals carried water to fields, and walls helped protect the city. These public works required planning and cooperation. When a community has a food supply, a city, specialized jobs, government, religion, writing, and public works, historians recognize several key characteristics of civilization.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did a steady food supply help Uruk grow into a civilization?

2 Name two specialized jobs in Uruk and tell what each worker did.

3 How did writing help the leaders of Uruk?

4 Name four characteristics of civilization shown in Uruk. Use a detail from the passage to support each one.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent a river community that could become a civilization. In 5 or 6 sentences, describe three characteristics of civilization in your community and explain how each one helps the community.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline details that show a characteristic of civilization. Number the seven different characteristics you find in the passage. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did a steady food supply help Uruk grow into a civilization?	It meant not everyone had to farm, so people could do other jobs as the settlement grew.
2	Name two specialized jobs in Uruk and tell what each worker did.	Answers include workers making pottery, cloth, tools, or bricks; merchants trading goods; priests leading ceremonies; scribes keeping records; or rulers directing workers and collecting resources.
3	How did writing help the leaders of Uruk?	Scribes used writing to keep records of grain, trade, and payments, which helped leaders manage a growing population.
4	Name four characteristics of civilization shown in Uruk. Use a detail from the passage to support each one.	Answers may include a steady food supply from irrigated fields, a city with neighborhoods and markets, specialized jobs, government led by rulers, religion in temples, writing on clay tablets, or public works such as canals and walls.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Along the Azul River, farmers use canals to grow enough grain for the whole town. Because there is extra food, some people become potters and traders instead of farmers. A council organizes workers to repair the canals and build a wall around the town. Scribes record grain stores so the council can plan for dry seasons. The town also has a temple where people gather for religious ceremonies. Its food supply, specialized jobs, government, writing, religion, and public works show that it is a civilization.

Accept accurate characteristics of civilization that are clearly described and connected to a benefit or purpose. For the open response, students may use any plausible fictional river community and should explain at least three characteristics.