

Belonging in Ur

Find how shared culture gave a settlement its identity.

6.3a "Humans living together in settlements develop shared customs, beliefs, ideas, and languages that give identity to the group."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one shared custom, circle one shared belief, and number two details that show how language or writing connected people in Ur. Draw a star beside one detail that shows why these shared features gave residents a group identity.

Life in a Sumerian City

- ① About 4,500 years ago, the Sumerian city of Ur stood in southern Mesopotamia, near the Euphrates River. Its people lived close together behind city walls and depended on farms watered by canals. Living in one settlement meant making choices together. Families followed shared routines for planting, repairing canals, trading in markets, and bringing goods to the city temple. These repeated practices became customs, ways of acting that many people in the group recognized and used.
- ② Religion also joined Ur's residents. They believed that powerful gods affected the natural world and the city's future. The city's main temple honored Nanna, the moon god. Priests led ceremonies, and people brought offerings of food or goods. On festival days, groups gathered for music, processions, and religious events. These beliefs and gatherings gave people common reasons to celebrate, worry, and cooperate. They helped residents see themselves as members of Ur, not simply as separate families.
- ③ Ur's scribes used cuneiform, a writing system made by pressing wedge-shaped marks into wet clay. Writing allowed officials and merchants to record deliveries, taxes, and trade. It also carried the Sumerian language beyond spoken conversations. When people heard the same language, used the same signs, and learned shared stories and skills, they could communicate as part of one community. Ur had its own local traditions, yet its people also shared many cultural practices with other Sumerian cities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are two shared customs that families in Ur followed?

2 What did people in Ur believe, and what is one action they took because of their beliefs?

3 How did cuneiform and the Sumerian language help people communicate as one community?

4 According to the passage, how could residents of Ur have both a local identity and connections to other Sumerian cities?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine a river settlement. Write five sentences that describe one shared custom, one belief or idea, and one language or writing practice. Explain how these shared features give the group an identity.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one shared custom, circle one shared belief, and number two details that show how language or writing connected people in Ur. Draw a star beside one detail that shows why these shared features gave residents a group identity. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are two shared customs that families in Ur followed?	Answers include planting, repairing canals, trading in markets, and bringing goods to the city temple.
2	What did people in Ur believe, and what is one action they took because of their beliefs?	They believed powerful gods affected the natural world and the city's future. They brought offerings, attended ceremonies, or gathered for religious festivals.
3	How did cuneiform and the Sumerian language help people communicate as one community?	People used the same writing signs and language to record information and communicate beyond spoken conversations.
4	According to the passage, how could residents of Ur have both a local identity and connections to other Sumerian cities?	Ur had its own local traditions, while its people also shared many cultural practices with other Sumerian cities.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Riverbend, families meet each spring to clear mud from the canal. They believe the river should be protected because it gives water to every field. At meetings, people speak the Riverbend words for water and harvest. Scribes carve those words on clay tags for grain stores. These shared actions, beliefs, and words help residents recognize themselves as the Riverbend community.

Accept equivalent passage-based examples for the first three questions. For the open response, look for a custom, a belief or idea, a language or writing practice, and a clear explanation of how these features create group identity.