River Valley Civilizations

Nile
Tigris and Euphrates
Yangtze and Huang He
Indus and Ganges
Tigris and Euphrates Rivers  2500 BC

- Part of Mesopotamia or Fertile Crescent
- Means “Land between the Rivers “
Sumerians Arrived on the Scene

- Built irrigation ditches to supply water to their fields and allowed them to produce surplus crops
- Set up trading network trading grain, cloth and crafted tools
- Created city-states led by priests
- Practiced religion of many gods (polytheism)
Sumerian Culture

• Developed arithmetic and geometry and a number system of base 60
• Architectural innovations included the development of arches, columns, ramps and pyramid structures called ziggurats
Sumerian Culture

• Developed system of writing called cuneiform
• Created first empire in the region
• Developed bronze tools and weapons
Nile River

- The Nile river flooded annually like clockwork.
- The flooding brought fresh silt to the fields and deltas of the Nile river valley.
Egyptians 3200 BC

• Utilized a system of ditches to irrigate their crops from the Nile river, growing wheat and barley
• Egypt consisted of two kingdoms, the Upper and the Lower Kingdoms
• Egyptian pharaohs ruled as gods in a government system where the god-kings were all-powerful
• The system of authority was based on religious authority and called a theocracy
Egyptian Culture

- Pharaohs and Egyptian culture believed the king ruled after death
- They built immense structures, the Pyramids, as the final resting places of the Pharaohs
- Egyptian religion was polytheistic and believed in an after-life
- Pharaohs were mummified for their next life
- Wealth and splendor of Egyptian culture created beautiful works of art made of gold, silver, ivory, glass and precious stones
- Egyptian culture allowed for division of labor that created many artisans and specialized workers
- Egyptians developed a system of writing called pictographs that evolved into the more familiar Egyptian hieroglyphics
- Egyptians even developed a type of paper called papyrus
Egyptian Science and Technology

• Developed a calendar that kept track of the Nile flood times
• Developed a system of writing numbers
• An elaborate system of doctors and medicine
• Developed watercraft used to trade up and down the Nile river
Indian Sub-continent
Indus and Ganges Rivers

• Made up a large fertile flood plain the Northern India and present day Pakistan
• Seasonal monsoon rains brought predictable floods to the river systems
• Annual floods brought rich deposits of soil over a wide area
Farming Begins Along These Rivers

- Early cultures used the water resources of the two rivers to irrigate their fields and produce crop surpluses
- 2500 BC first cities emerge in this region
Harappa Culture

- Developed written language
- Division of labor within the culture
- Ruled as a theocracy
- Conducted thriving trade
China
Yangtze and Huang He River Systems

• First civilization of China developed along these rivers
• Growing rice and wheat
• First settlement 2000 BC
• Developed flood control and irrigation projects
Xi and Shang Dynasties

- Developed first civilizations in China’s river valley settlements
- Developed Chinese culture and started division of labor
- Spiritual or religious beliefs were closely related to family
- Developed writing
- Developed art and architecture