Ancient Sumer

Location and Era

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Aim

- I can say when and where the Ancient Sumerian civilisation first appeared.

Success Criteria

- I can locate where Ancient Sumer was on a world map.
- I can label a map of Ancient Sumer.
- I can place some events from the Ancient Sumerian era on a timeline.

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Who were the Ancient Sumerians and where did they live?

- The Ancient Sumerians lived in Sumer from 4000 BC.
- Today Sumer no long exists, the land is part of Iraq.
- The Sumerians built large cities and invented a written script.
- They had a significant effect on the world as it is today.

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Look at this world map. Can you see Iraq? The civilisation of Ancient Sumer existed there from around 4000 BC.

Photo courtesy of Map data ©2014 Basarsoft, Google, ORION-ME, SK planet, ZENRIN

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Ancient Sumer and Mesopotamia

Look at this close up map of Ancient Sumer. Can you read some of the city names? The Greeks later called this area 'Mesopotamia' meaning 'The land between two rivers'. Sumer was in Southern Mesopotamia.

- What two rivers is the land between?
- Why do you think the Sumerian people chose to build their cities and homes here?

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Ancient Sumer
Timeline

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5,000 BC

The people called 'Sumer' move into the land Mesopotamia. They form the first towns and cities, plant crops and begin farming the land.

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4,000 BC

The Sumer people build temples for their gods. These temples are called Ziggurats and can be found scattered around what is today called Iraq and Iran.

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4,000 BC

Pottery is simplified from highly decorative vessels to plain, unpainted pottery. This was mass-produced by specialists on fast wheels.

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3,300 BC

The Sumerians start to inscribe on clay tablets using pictures for words. They put these together to form sentences and one of the first forms of writing is invented.

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3,200 BC

The wheel is invented and is used on vehicles to cart things around.

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3,000 BC

The Ancient Sumerians begin to use mathematics.

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2,700 BC

Gilgamesh becomes the 5th king of Uruk (modern day Iraq). According to the Sumerian King list, Gilgamesh ruled for 126 years. In Mesopotamian mythology Gilgamesh is a demigod, he is described as two thirds god and one third man, with superhuman strength.

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