

MCQs for Theme 1: Writing and City Life

1. The historical region of Mesopotamia is located in the land that is part of which modern country?
 - A. Syria
 - B. Turkey
 - C. Iran
 - D. Iraq
2. The Greek name 'Mesopotamia' literally means:
 - A. The land of brick-built cities
 - B. The land between the rivers
 - C. The fertile crescent
 - D. The land of the great kings
3. Which two rivers define the geographical area of Mesopotamia?
 - A. Nile and Jordan
 - B. Indus and Ganges
 - C. Euphrates and Tigris
 - D. Danube and Rhine
4. According to the sources, the most far-reaching change that took place at least 5,000 years before the establishment of the first cities was the shift from:
 - A. Bronze tools to iron tools
 - B. Warfare to peaceful trade
 - C. Nomadic life to settled agriculture
 - D. Pictographs to cuneiform
5. Around 10,000 years ago, people started adopting agriculture. Which animals were domesticated around this time?
 - A. Lion and Tiger
 - B. Sheep, goat, cattle, pig, and donkey
 - C. Horse and Camel
 - D. Llama and Alpaca
6. Which region of Iraq was the most agriculturally productive, despite having low rainfall?
 - A. The Steppe of the North
 - B. The Mountainous East
 - C. The South (where the rivers deposit silt)
 - D. The Western Desert
7. In early Mesopotamia, why was the transport of goods by river boat and barge the cheapest and most efficient method?
 - A. Boats were powered by advanced steam engines.
 - B. River currents or wind could propel boats easily.

- C. Wheeled carts were unknown at the time.
- D. The river route avoided all taxation.

8. Which resource was scarce in Mesopotamia, requiring them to import it from regions like Turkey, Iran, and the Gulf?

- A. Agricultural produce
- B. Textiles
- C. Mineral resources (stone, wood, metal)
- D. Fish and dates

9. The earliest known language of Mesopotamia, gradually replaced by Akkadian after 2400 BCE, was:

- A. Aramaic
- B. Hebrew
- C. Sumerian
- D. Greek

10. In which year (BCE) does the timeline indicate the replacement of the Sumerian language by Akkadian?

- A. c. 3200 BCE
- B. c. 3000 BCE
- C. c. 2400 BCE
- D. c. 2000 BCE

11. Writing converts spoken sounds into:

- A. Complex poetry
- B. Visible signs
- C. Musical instruments
- D. Mathematical problems

12. The first Mesopotamian tablets, written around 3200 BCE, contained:

- A. Legal codes and land transfer records.
- B. Epic poetry, like Gilgamesh.
- C. Picture-like signs and numbers.
- D. Detailed astronomical observations.

13. The wedge-shaped signs pressed into wet clay tablets by a scribe are known as:

- A. Hieroglyphics
- B. Cuneiform
- C. Syllables
- D. Pictographs

14. By c. 2600 BCE, Mesopotamian writing was used for purposes beyond simple record-keeping. Which of the following was one of the complex uses?

- A. Writing dictionaries
- B. Training soldiers

- C. Mapping constellations
- D. Predicting the weather

15. Why were few Mesopotamians able to read and write?

- A. Writing was restricted only to the royal family.
- B. The system had only 26 signs like the English alphabet.
- C. The hundreds of signs in the script were complex.
- D. They preferred oral tradition entirely.

16. Which city was known as "The City" in Mesopotamian civilization, renowned for its temples and the long-distance trade associated with King Enmerkar?

- A. Mari
- B. Ur
- C. Babylon
- D. Uruk

17. According to the source, what material did Mesopotamians write on?

- A. Papyrus rolls
- B. Stone walls
- C. Clay tablets
- D. Animal skins

18. Around 5000 BCE, the earliest settlements in Southern Mesopotamia gradually developed around which type of structure?

- A. Fortified Palaces
- B. Administrative Palaces
- C. Temples
- D. City walls

19. Temples in early Mesopotamia were considered the theoretical owners of:

- A. The writing script.
- B. The armies and weapons.
- C. Agricultural lands, herds, and fisheries.
- D. All trade routes.

20. Which of the following was a goddess worshipped in Uruk?

- A. Dagan
- B. Inanna
- C. Ishtar
- D. Venus

21. Why did continuous warfare contribute to the emergence of kingship in Mesopotamia?

- A. Kings needed to secure trade routes for the temple.
- B. Successful chiefs distributed loot and organized leadership for the community.
- C. The gods demanded a single human representative.
- D. Warfare led to peaceful, democratic settlements.

22. Around 3000 BCE, how large did the city of Uruk grow?

- A. 25 hectares
- B. 50 hectares
- C. 150 hectares
- D. 250 hectares

23. What type of family structure was generally found in Mesopotamian society?

- A. Joint family
- B. Extended family
- C. Nuclear family (a man, his wife, and children)
- D. Patriarchal commune

24. Which city was one of the earliest to be systematically excavated in the 1930s, providing information on Mesopotamian city life?

- A. Uruk
- B. Nineveh
- C. Ur
- D. Mari

25. A defining characteristic of town planning in the residential area of Ur was the presence of:

- A. Wide, straight streets for carts.
- B. Narrow, winding streets.
- C. Elaborate street drains.
- D. High stone walls surrounding every house.

26. In the houses of Ur, where was rainwater typically channeled, given the absence of street drains?

- A. Directly into the Euphrates
- B. Into a covered basin called a sump in the inner courtyards.
- C. Poured out onto the street.
- D. Stored in large communal tanks.

27. According to Mesopotamian house superstitions recorded at Ur, what did a main wooden door opening inwards signify?

- A. Prosperity and good luck.
- B. The wife would constantly argue with her husband.
- C. The family was devoted to the Moon God.
- D. The house was protected from floods.

28. The Palace of King Zimrilim (1810–1760 BCE) was located in which Mesopotamian royal capital?

- A. Uruk
- B. Babylon
- C. Mari
- D. Assur

29. The palace of King Zimrilim at Mari covered an area of approximately:

- A. 1.0 hectare
- B. 2.4 hectares
- C. 5.0 hectares
- D. 10.0 hectares

30. The kingdom of Mari was famous because its surrounding territory was heavily reliant on:

- A. Hunting and gathering.
- B. Animal herding (pastoralism).
- C. Mining copper and tin.
- D. Deep-sea fishing.

31. The kings of Mari were Amorites, who originated from:

- A. The northern mountains.
- B. The western desert.
- C. The Persian Gulf.
- D. Egypt.

32. To acknowledge the mixed culture of Mari, the kings built a temple for Dagan, who was the god of the:

- A. Sea
- B. Steppe
- C. Sky
- D. City walls

33. How much tax did officials at Mari levy on the cargo carried by boats moving along the Euphrates?

- A. One-third of the value of the goods.
- B. One-tenth of the value of the goods.
- C. Half the value of the goods.
- D. No tax was levied.

34. According to records, what goods were commonly carried on boats trading through Mari?

- A. Silk and spices
- B. Wood, copper, tin, wine, and oil
- C. Tea and coffee
- D. Wheat and barley only

35. What was the role of the cylinder seal in Mesopotamian urban life?

- A. Used as currency for trade.
- B. Rolled on clay to create a continuous picture, marking the authenticity of a cloth package or pot mouth.
- C. Used as a military decoration.
- D. Worn only by high priests.

36. The city of Babylon became an important urban centre around:

- A. 5000 BCE

- B. 3200 BCE
- C. 2000 BCE
- D. 668 BCE

37. Mesopotamians are best known for their contribution to time reckoning and:

- A. Architecture
- B. Shipbuilding
- C. Metallurgy
- D. Mathematics

38. The Mesopotamian division of the day into 24 hours, and the hour into 60 minutes was adopted later by which civilisation?

- A. Harappan
- B. Egyptian
- C. Roman world
- D. Chinese

39. Tablets dating to c. 1800 BCE show that Mesopotamians had detailed knowledge of which mathematical concept?

- A. Velocity and Acceleration
- B. Compound interest
- C. Calculus
- D. Binary system

40. The Epic of Gilgamesh is about the ruler of which city?

- A. Mari
- B. Babylon
- C. Uruk
- D. Nineveh

41. The king who collected a massive library at his capital, Nineveh, was:

- A. Gilgamesh
- B. Nabonidus
- C. Assurbanipal
- D. Sargon

42. When did Assurbanipal rule?

- A. c. 2370 BCE
- B. c. 1810–1760 BCE
- C. 668–627 BCE
- D. 331 BCE

43. The library collected by Assurbanipal at Nineveh contained approximately how many tablets?

- A. 100
- B. 5,000

- C. 15,000
- D. 30,000

44. Alexander of Macedonia conquered Babylon in which year?

- A. 668 BCE
- B. 539 BCE
- C. 332 BCE
- D. 331 BCE

45. Which early human species' fossils were found in Africa dating back 6 mya–500,000 BP?

- A. Homo Erectus
- B. Homo Habilis
- C. Australopithecus
- D. Homo Sapiens

46. Sargon, the King of Akkad, ruled around:

- A. 5000 BCE
- B. 3200 BCE
- C. 2370 BCE
- D. 1800 BCE

47. Which substance was known to the Mesopotamians as "Alashiya" and was an item of trade?

- A. Barley
- B. Silver
- C. Copper
- D. Stone

48. In the context of early societies (Timeline I), when did the domestication of the dog take place in West Asia?

- A. 8000–7000 BCE
- B. 3000–2000 BCE
- C. 50,000–30,000 BP
- D. 30,000–10,000 BP

49. According to the Babylonian tradition, who was the last ruler of independent Babylon?

- A. Assurbanipal
- B. Nabonidus
- C. Gilgamesh
- D. Hammurabi

50. The term Akkadian and Cuneiform script remained in use until which period?

- A. c. 2000 BCE
- B. c. 1000 BCE
- C. c. 1st Century CE
- D. 331 BCE

Answer Key

1. D) Iraq
2. B) The land between the rivers
3. C) Euphrates and Tigris
4. C) Nomadic life to settled agriculture
5. B) Sheep, goat, cattle, pig, and donkey
6. C) The South (where the rivers deposit silt)
7. B) River currents or wind could propel boats easily.
8. C) Mineral resources (stone, wood, metal)
9. C) Sumerian
10. C) c. 2400 BCE
11. B) Visible signs
12. C) Picture-like signs and numbers.
13. B) Cuneiform
14. A) Writing dictionaries
15. C) The hundreds of signs in the script were complex.
16. D) Uruk
17. C) Clay tablets
18. C) Temples
19. C) Agricultural lands, herds, and fisheries.
20. B) Inanna
21. B) Successful chiefs distributed loot and organized leadership for the community.
22. D) 250 hectares
23. C) Nuclear family (a man, his wife, and children)
24. C) Ur
25. B) Narrow, winding streets.
26. B) Into a covered basin called a sump in the inner courtyards.
27. B) The wife would constantly argue with her husband.
28. C) Mari

29. B) 2.4 hectares

30. B) Animal herding (pastoralism).

31. B) The western desert.

32. B) Steppe

33. B) One-tenth of the value of the goods.

34. B) Wood, copper, tin, wine, and oil

35. B) Rolled on clay to create a continuous picture, marking the authenticity of a cloth package or pot mouth.

36. C) 2000 BCE

37. D) Mathematics

38. C) Roman world

39. B) Compound interest

40. C) Uruk

41. C) Assurbanipal

42. C) c. 668–627 BCE

43. D) 30,000

44. D) 331 BCE

45. C) Australopithecus

46. C) 2370 BCE

47. C) Copper

48. D) 30,000–10,000 BP

49. B) Nabonidus

50. C) c. 1st Century CE
