

Homework Assignments: Paraphrase the following statements. Supply the paraphrased statement on your own paper. Use complete sentences. Example: (Statement) Agriculture was of great importance to the Sumerians. Through the use of irrigation they were able to grow a surplus of crops. (paraphrase) The Sumerians used irrigation to grow enough food for everyone. They felt this was very important.

1. The surplus of food allowed the Sumerians to settle in one place and build permanent structures. These permanent buildings grouped together, and slowly developed into towns and cities.
2. Having a surplus of food allowed some people to specialize. Everyone did not have to farm. Some people became metal workers, some became builders, some became brick makers, and a priest caste developed. The priests were in charge of the irrigation projects and ensured that all farmers were provided with the water they needed to grow crops.
3. As the cities grew, and the importance of the priests grew, temples, called Ziggurats, were built to honor the Gods. Everyone brought gifts to the temples for the Gods, but only the High Priest was allowed to speak to the Gods.
4. To keep track of the gifts that had been given to the gods by each individual, the priests slowly developed a system of writing called pictographs. Pictographs evolved over the years into stylized symbols, where each symbol represented a sound instead of representing a word. These markings are called Cuneiform. Cuneiform is the first written language that we have discovered so far.
5. In addition to inventing the first written language the Mesopotamians invented many other things we use today. These items included the wheel, and Wheeled platform (carts and chariots), the sailboat, the plow and plowseeder, irrigation, the hoe, many other tools, and finally a written set of laws.
6. Hammurabi's code was written down so that everyone would know the laws. Each law had a set punishment which was applied equally to everyone throughout the empire. While harsh by our standards, these laws and punishments were the cornerstone of the idea of rule by law verses rule by decree and the idea of rule by law is a cornerstone of our own government.