Mesopotamian Religion and Writing

The religion of Mesopotamia was a kind of _______. This means they had a belief in many _______. Sumerians had ______ main gods and around ______ lower gods. They had ______ qualities and were seen to be ______ and ______, much like the conditions in the environment.

Each city-state had their own ______ with whom only the ______ could talk with. Priests were the ______ and thought to carry out the work of the ______. They controlled many important things in the city-state such as ______, ______, and stored ______. The Sumerians offered ______ and animal sacrifices to the ______ to insure they would have good ______ and a good ______. They believed their purpose on ______ was to serve the gods.

Priests were also in charge of the ______, which were called ______ or ______. Only wealthy, young ______ were taught to ______ (with a few exceptions). The schooling was very ______ and boring, but guaranteed the boys a good job as a ______. Very few people could ______ or ______, so scribes were in demand. Sumerian ______ developed because of a need to keep track of ______ deals. Early ______ started out as ______, but over time changed into ______ shaped symbols known as ______. Scribes used a reed called a ______ to
press into the soft **clay** tablets. Now **records**, ideas, treaties and even **legends** could be written down. The very first **written** epic comes from the Sumerians. It is a myth about an actual **king** named **Gilgamesh** from the city-state of **Ur** who is on a quest to find **immortality**.
Later Mesopotamia

Since there were many battles between the city-states and with nomads, the priest would need to consult an assembly of people for help. The assembly would elect one person to lead the battles and act as temporary king. Once the battles were over, and the king no longer needed, he would go back to being a regular man. However, the city-states found themselves in war so often that eventually the priest and the king shared the power. The priest would handle the religious aspects of the city-state, while the king would control the everyday duties of the city-states. Kings were seen by the people as having power given to them by the gods.

Each city-state remained independent until King Sargon I from Akkad started to invade all the neighboring city-states and take control of them. He would destroy the cities and then burn down the walls to show his power. He was a cruel leader and the people of Mesopotamia and Sumer resented being controlled by him. Since Sargon controlled all the city-states, Mesopotamia was now considered an empire. An empire is when several regions are ruled by one person. Sargon passed his power to his son, and eventually his grandson. Over a 100
years later, the empire fell because of all the revolts within the city-states and the difficulty of protecting so much flat land.

After centuries of constant battles and returning to independence, the king of Babylon, Hammurabi, conquered all the land and controlled all city-states of Mesopotamia. Hammurabi was a fair and just ruler, but he was also very strong. He had judges and governors keep track of the individual city-states and report back to him. He is most famous for the Code of Hammurabi. This was a set of 282 laws that all the people of Babylonia were expected to follow. His punishments were very harsh, ranging from fines to death. Prison was not an option. He created the idea of an eye for an eye justice. He believed if you committed a crime; the same should be done to you. He varied the punishment according to a person’s social status. He had his laws written into a large stone that was placed in the center of the city for all to see. Babylonia was a great empire, but soon crumbled after Hammurabi’s death.

Contributions
- 1st writing system
- Wheel, sailboat, plow to help with farming
- 60 system based on 6 (60 sec., 60 min., 360°)
- 12 month calendar