WORLD HISTORY notes Day 1

Mesopotamian Civilizations

FERTILE CRESCENT

* Shaped like a crescent with fertile land good for growing crops
* Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Iraq

MESOPOTAMIA

* “Meso” = middle
* “Land between the Rivers” – Tigris / Euphrates

CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

* “birthplace” of civilization

SUMERIANS – 3500 BC

* “history begins at Sumer”
  + wheel, arch, potter’s wheel, sundial, 12 month calendar, Astronomy, # system to 60, Bronze
* made up of city-states
* leaders had political/religious power (Theocracy)
  + lugals
  + bravest warrior
  + ”agents of gods”
* Polytheistic
  + everything possessed by a spirit
    - gods were powerful, immortal, human emotions (Anthropomorphic)
      * rain = gods crying
      * crops grew = male god mating with his goddess wife
      * people saw hot/dry times when their fields turned brown as a time of death for

gods

* gods came back to life when crops grew again
* humanity created to serve gods
* gods controlled past/future
* whatever skills humanity had the gods allowed them to develop
* since they viewed gods as giving them everything, they viewed gods as good
* hardships/misfortunes were result of humans displeasing the gods
  + gods let demons punish people for upsetting gods
* people tried to please gods – led to Astrology (Zodiac)
  + keep gods happy or at least tolerant
  + Ziggurat = temple
  + believed in afterlife – dark, gloomy

Cuneiform

* Sumerians developed 1st writing system
* pictographic
* Epic of Gilgamesh
* 1st book written

AKKADIANS – 2330 BC

* Sargon I – conquered Sumerians
  + 1st “warlord”
  + beginning of Empire building
    - conquering other areas