

In this unit, students will be introduced to the development of early civilizations.

### What's the story?

Students will study **Mesopotamia** and **Egypt**. They will explore the fundamental features of **civilizations**, including the development of **farming**, the establishments of **cities** and **government**, and the creation of practices such as **writing** and **religion**.

### What will my student learn?

Students will learn about Mesopotamia, the importance of the **Tigris** and **Euphrates rivers**, and the earliest form of writing: **cuneiform**. They will also learn about Egypt, the importance of the **Nile River**, and the building of the **Great Pyramid**.

In the first two parts of the domain, the **concept of religion** in Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt is introduced as one of the forces **shaping those civilizations**. The end of this domain provides a **historical development** of three world religions—**Judaism**, **Christianity**, and **Islam**.

Throughout this domain, students will focus on **informational writing**. They will **compare key components**, **create timelines**, and **collaborate** with their peers to write about what they learned.

### Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. How was Mesopotamian writing (cuneiform) different from ours? How was it the same?  
**Follow up:** How was the way Mesopotamians used writing the same as the way ancient Egyptians used it?
2. What are the five components of a civilization? (farming, cities, writing, leaders, and religion)
3. Why did most people in ancient Egypt live near the Nile River?  
**Follow up:** Could ancient Egypt have existed without the Nile River? Why?
4. Why was the Great Pyramid built?  
**Follow up:** What was it made of? How would you describe a pyramid?