STABLE FOOD SUPPLY

Sumerians invented two things to help them create a stable food supply: **irrigation systems** and **the plow**

Irrigation systems were a network of canals, dams, and reservoirs to provide their crops with a regular supply of water (and therefore, allowing their crops to grow and provide food!)

The plow was a tool for turning the soil to prepare it for planting. Farmers used to do this by hand, but it took a very long time. The plow allowed for quicker planting and allowed more crops to grow

Did Ancient Sumer have a Stable Food Supply??

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

A social structure includes different jobs and social levels
People at higher levels have more power than those at lower levels

Archeologists have found <u>evidence</u> that several classes of people lived in Sumer

At the top was an **upper class**, which included landowners, priests, and government officials. These people had the largest and nicest houses that were two stories tall.

In the middle was the **common class** and this included farmers, fishermen, merchants, and craftspeople. The craftspeople worked with metals like gold, silver, tin, lead, copper, and bronze. They made weapons (swords) and tools (plows).

At the very bottom were **slaves**. They lived in their owners' homes and had no property of their own.

Did Ancient Sumer have a Social Structure??

GOVERNMENT

A civilization must have a system of government that rules over people and keeps things in order. Ancient Sumer was ruled by a king. The Sumerians believed that kings were chosen by the gods, and this belief made their kings very powerful.

Sumerian kings did the following tasks:

- Enforced laws
- Collected taxes
- Built temples
- Maintained irrigation systems
- Led the army

Kings employed several people under them. Governors ruled over neighboring towns; scribes helped write down laws; another group of officials looked after the canals

Did Ancient Sumer have a government??

RELIGION

A religious system includes a set of beliefs, usually in a god or gods, together with forms of worship. Sumerian religious beliefs influenced every part of daily life. Sumerians tried to please the gods with everything they did.

Sumerians expressed their religious beliefs by building **ziggurats** (temples). Some were eight stories high and 200 feet wide! Sumerians believed their gods lived in the ziggurats

Sumerians also expressed their religious beliefs through **religious statues**. The statues were detailed and very lifelike. The Sumerians believed that the gods would be pleased when people showed them devotion and love.

Did Ancient Sumer have Religion??

THE ARTS

The arts include creative forms of expression like painting, architecture, and music. All of these things can be found in Sumer!

Decorative items such as mirrors and jewelry were made by metalworkers

Temples and ziggurats were designed by architects and used to honor the gods

Music was also very important in Sumer. Sumerians believed that music pleased the gods and brought joy to people as well. One instrument that was found in Sumer is called a lyre, or a small harp. Musicians would decorate their instruments with intricate designs and precious metals, proving how much they cared about them

Did Ancient Sumer have The Arts??

TECHNOLOGY

When we talk about technology, we mean new forms of practical tools and inventions. Sumerians invented several forms of technology.

The Sumerians' most important invention was THE WHEEL
They used the wheel for pottery making, farming, driving chariots, and hauling heavy items.

Another technologic invention was the arch (like an arch in a doorway!) Sumerians began building arches above doorways to add strength and beauty to Sumerian buildings. They would stack bricks made of clay and straw so that they rose in steps from the walls until they met in the center. These became a common feature of temples and upper-class homes.

Did Ancient Sumer have Technology??

WRITING

A civilization must have writing, or a "highly developed written word"

The Sumerians developed a written language called **cuneiform** in about 2400 BCE in order to record the trading they did

Can you use the symbols below in order to write your name?

Did Ancient Sumer have Writing??