MESOPOTAMIA
land between two rivers
EUPHRATES

TIGRIS

MESOPOTAMIA
ZAGROS MOUNTAINS

ARABIAN DESERT
NORTHERN PLAIN

Dry and hot during the summer. But in the autumn, cooler temperatures and light rain make the area very fertile and able to sustain intensive agriculture.

SOUTHERN PLAIN

Even in the cooler months, rainfall is low and unpredictable (> 200 mm/year). Precipitation is insufficient for agriculture.
HYDROLOGIC ORIGINS OF COMPLEXITY

- Digging canals required cooperative labor and a degree of central control

- Once canals were dug, farmers became dependent for survival

- Opportunity for community leaders to expand power by exploiting control over irrigation system
BEGINNINGS OF COMPLEXITY

Hassuna, Samarra, Half, and Ubaid
HASSUNA: 6500-6000 BC
SAMARRA: 6500-5900 BC
HALAF: 6000-5400 BC
UBAID: 5900-4200 BC
HASSUNA
6500-6000 BC
BEEHIVE HOUSES
UBAID
5900-4000 (3800) BC
UBAID I: 5300–4700 BC
UBAID II: 4800–4500 BC
UBAID III/IV: 4500–4000 BC
UBAID I

Geographically limited to the very south of modern day Iraq, close to the Persian Gulf. Clear connections to the Samarra culture in the north. First permanent settlements south of the 5 inch rainfall isohyet. Agriculture aided by high water table in southern region.
UBAID II

Saw the development of extensive canal networks from major settlements. Irrigation agriculture, which seem to have developed first at Choga Mami (4700–4600 BC), rapidly spread in this period.
IRRIGATION
**UBAID III/IV**

Also referred to as Ubaid I/II. Intense and rapid urbanization. Spread northward to replace the Halaf culture. Ubaid material culture spread along the Arabian peninsula, showing the growth of a trading system that stretched from the Mediterranean coast through to Oman.
1. **Social stratification** and inequality as demonstrated by mortuary goods

2. **Large public temples**, the most noteworthy being located in the southern site of Eridu

3. **Kin-based elite** who maintained power though the administration of the temple shrines and their granaries (possibly irrigation infrastructure)
THE UBAID IDENTITY

The Ubaid culture laid the foundation for later Mesopotamian identity. The extent (geographically) of Ubaid material culture roughly conforms to the later Mesopotamian boundaries.
cities, states, and writing

URUK
URUK: 4000-3100 BC

1. The emergence of writing in the middle of the Uruk period (c. 3500 BC)

2. The emergence of cities and eventually large city states

3. The growth of centralized religious and secular control (balance of palace and temple)
URUK: EMERGENCE OF WRITING
HOW?
BULLA (BULLAE)
BULLA/TOKENS

Records of financial transactions. Bullae were sealed and then stamped on the outside to indicate their contents.
WHY NOT
WITH THE
TOKENS?

DO AWAY
WITH THE

TOKENS?
POINT OF WRITING

Need of the growing urban community to record and store information to assist with accounting procedures
URUK:
CITIES AND CITY STATES
CITIES ARE IMPORTANT
(to Uruk)
UBAID

LAYING THE URBAN FOUNDATION
THE CITY OF Uruk
Anu District of Uruk III

1. anu ziggurat
2. altar
3. NW terrace
4. processional stairs
S. stone building
W. white temple
“URBAN IMPLOSION”
THE END