Mesopotamia: Land Between Two Rivers

* Mesopotamia is nicknamed "The Fertile Crescent".
* The Fertile Crescent includes the countries of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, the Sinai Peninsula, and Northern Mesopotamia.

**The Land Between Two Rivers**:

* Ancient Mesopotamia was located in a piece of The Fertile Crescent, in what is now southern Iraq. It covered an area about 300 miles long and about 150 miles wide.
* The word Mesopotamia actually means (in Greek) “the land between the rivers.”
* The two rivers referred to by the ancient Greeks are the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers.
* In Northern Mesopotamia, the land is fertile. There is seasonal rain. The rivers and streams are fed from the hills and mountains of the region.  The rain and melting snow swell the rivers, and carry soil to plains - depositing fine soil, or **silt**, making land fertile, good for crops.
* In Southern Mesopotamia, the land is mostly flat and barren. Temperatures can rise over 110 degrees. The semiarid climate means hot summers and limited rainfall.
* Storms do blow in from the Persian Gulf, which cools things off.

* Mesopotamia had no forests for wood, and thus lacked building materials
* Area had few mountains or natural barriers so it was easy to invade
* Mesopotamians traded their surplus grain for stone, wood, metal
* Many thousands of years ago, early settlers wandered into the land between two rivers.  The Natural vegetation and wildlife kept the people well fed. The rivers provided fresh drinking water, and a place to bathe.
* These early people settled down, invented a system of irrigation, and began to [farm the land](http://mesopotamia.mrdonn.org/agriculture.html).