

# The "Land Between the Rivers"

## Mesopotamia:

Mesopotamia is a Greek word which means "land between the rivers". The two rivers that supply Mesopotamia with fresh water are the Tigris and Euphrates River. The entire area is part of the "Fertile Crescent", which is an arc of land from the Mediterranean Sea in the North, through Mesopotamia, to the Persian Gulf in the South.

## Fertile Soil:

The combination of nutrient rich soil and fresh water from the rivers made Mesopotamia the most fertile farmland in the region. The surrounding land is mostly desert. The Fertile Crescent was an area with flat land. Ancient people built large cities here.

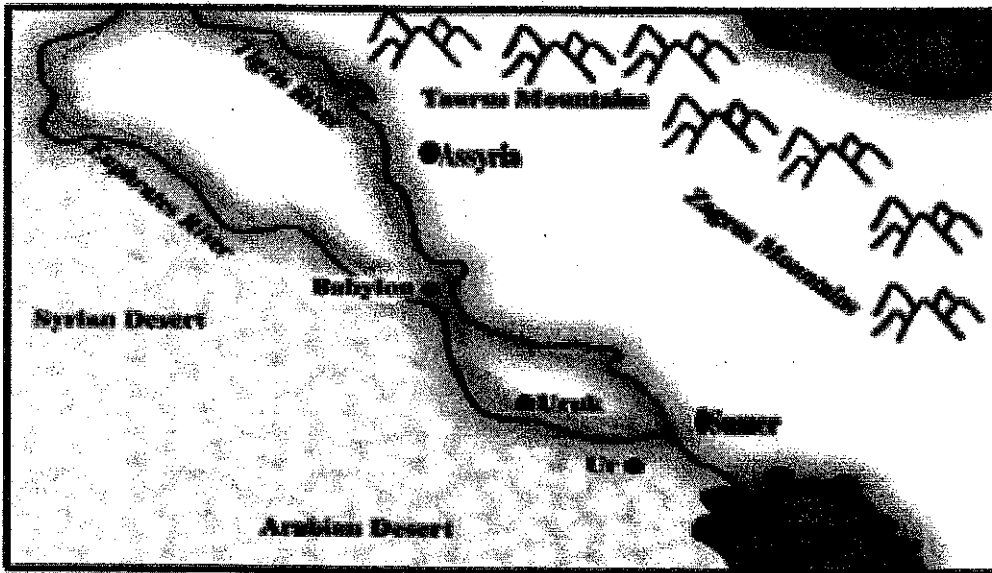
## Physical Geography:

Mesopotamia was located in the modern countries of Iraq, Syria and Egypt. Mesopotamia is made up of different regions, each with its own geography. The geography of each area and the natural resources found there affected the ways that people lived. Northern Mesopotamia is made up of

hills and plains. The land is quite fertile due to seasonal rains, and the rivers and streams flowing from the mountains. Early settlers famed the land and used metal, stone and timber from the mountains nearby. Southern Mesopotamia is made up of marshy areas and wide, flat barren plains. Cities developed along the rivers which flow through the region. Early settlers had to irrigate the land along the banks of the rivers in order for their crops to grow. Since they did not have many natural resources, contact with neighboring groups was important for their survival.

## Ancient Mesopotamia Map Skills

- Step 1: Trace the Tigris River, Euphrates River, + Persian Gulf [BLUE]
- Step 2: Highlight Babylonia, Sumar, and Assyria [PURPLE]
- Step 3: Trace a box around the 2 mountain ranges names [BROWN]
- Step 4: Trace a box around the 2 deserts names [YELLOW]
- Step 5: Label the area between the rivers MESOPOTAMIA + Color/Outline [GREEN]
- Step 6: Fill in the chart under the map. Think about how the physical features is important
- Step 7: Read the passage on the back, highlight, + annotate (link to the text)



**Directions:** Fill in the chart with each physical feature to Mesopotamia (river, mountain, desert, or sea) to explain how they made the Fertile Crescent a perfect location to develop a civilization. Add this information to the map next to the physical feature.

Physical Feature Name	How Did it Help Development of The Fertile Crescent
• Arabian & Syrian Desert	• Protected them from invading of other civilizations
• Persian Gulf	• Areas for fishing & trade
• Taurus & Zagros Mountains	• Protection & Flooding
• Euphrates & Tigris Rivers	• Fresh water / transportation

## Annual Flooding:

During ancient times, these rivers flooded annually. Flooding took place when the snow caps of the nearby mountains melts. Flooding would last for a few months. Once the rivers returned to their normal levels, Mesopotamian farmers would begin to plant crops in the fertile soil left behind. Today, modern practices of dammings the rivers and drainings the marshland hinders the annual floods.

# Seven Aspects of a Civilization

<p><b>Cities &amp; Food Supply</b></p>	<p>After about 3000 BC, several large cities were built in Mesopotamia. Each city had its own <u>god</u> and own <u>king</u> and was an independent city state. The <u>lack</u> of a centralized government meant there were frequent <u>wars</u> between the city-states and this may have contributed to the <u>fall</u> of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was located on a large <u>flood</u> plain and it built an extensive man-made <u>irrigation</u> system that enabled it to grow a <u>surplus</u> of food. Mesopotamia relied on the annual flooding of the two rivers for fertility but the <u>silt</u> became an obstacle to its irrigation systems, which consisted of <u>channels</u> of channels that watered the crops.</p>
<p><b>Social Class &amp; Job Specialization</b></p>	<p>Mesopotamian social <u>pyramid</u> had three main classes; <u>government</u> officials, <u>nobles</u> and <u>priests</u> were at the top. Second was a class comprised of <u>merchants</u>, <u>artisans</u>, craftsmen and <u>farmers</u>. On the bottom were the prisoners of war and <u>slaves</u>. Commoners were considered <u>free</u> citizens and were protected by the <u>law</u>.</p>
<p><b>Government &amp; Public Works</b></p>	<p>Mesopotamian architecture is probably the <u>oldest</u> architecture in the world. Mesopotamians constructed their buildings out of <u>mud-bricks</u> since there was very little natural <u>stone</u> in the area. The most important public buildings were called <u>ziggurats</u>. Each city-state had their own ziggurat which served as a <u>temple</u> and was a symbol of their power and prestige. Ziggurats are multi-stepped <u>pyramid</u> shaped buildings which was a place of <u>worship</u> and <u>sacrifices</u>. Mesopotamians also built <u>walls</u> around their city-states to fortify and protect their citizens from <u>attacks</u>. Other public buildings such as <u>palaces</u> and <u>storehouses</u>, which held a surplus of <u>grain</u> could be found within the city walls. The kings of Mesopotamian city-states used <u>slave</u> labor to build these massive structures.</p>
<p><b>Technology &amp; Contributions</b></p>	<p>The civilization of Ancient Mesopotamia brought many <u>important</u> advances in the areas of <u>technology</u> and <u>science</u>. Some of their note-worthy inventions include: the <u>wheel</u>, the <u>sailboat</u>, and the <u>plow</u>. The first wheel wasn't used for <u>transportation</u>. Instead it served a spinning pottery base. Transportation by land was hard and took enormous amounts of time. Mesopotamians quickly realized that transportation by <u>water</u> would be much easier and more <u>efficient</u>. The first <u>boats</u> were used for transportation along <u>river</u>s. The earliest plows were heavy and made from <u>wood</u>. Plows helped Mesopotamian farmers loosen soil in preparation for planting.</p>
<p><b>Culture, Art &amp; Architecture</b></p>	<p>Mesopotamian artifacts reflected the <u>lifestyle</u>, <u>customs</u> and <u>beliefs</u> of the people and were usually made from <u>stone</u>, <u>shells</u>, alabaster and <u>marble</u>. The Mesopotamian civilization comprises of Sumerian, Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian <u>cultural</u> influences and the art reflects this. Mesopotamian <u>palaces</u> were highly decorated and contained solid <u>ivory</u> furniture. Palaces served as socioeconomic institutions and in later times were used as <u>storehouses</u>, <u>workshops</u> and shrines. Everyone in Mesopotamia lived in a <u>house</u>; smaller ones for the poorer people and larger two-story houses for the more wealthy. Houses were built from <u>mudbricks</u>, plaster and wood.</p>
<p><b>Complex Religion &amp; Beliefs</b></p>	<p>Mesopotamian religion was <u>polytheistic</u>, meaning there were many gods and goddesses, as well as <u>henotheistic</u>, meaning that certain gods are viewed <u>superior</u> to others. In the latter Mesopotamian period, the people began <u>ranking</u> the deities in order of importance. Every god has a <u>priest</u>, <u>temple</u> and a traditional <u>ritual</u> and there were <u>hundreds</u> of temples scattered throughout each city.</p>
<p><b>Writing System &amp; Communication</b></p>	<p>Some of the first <u>writing</u> was developed in Mesopotamia. Many historians credit the <u>Sumerian</u> people for this writing. The writing looked like <u>symbols</u> and was called cuneiform. Cuneiform means "<u>wedge shaped</u>", because the symbols they used have wedges. <u>Scribes</u> used a cut reed as a writing <u>stylus</u>, and wrote cuneiform in moist clay <u>tablets</u>, which were later dried in the sun. Cuneiform was the earliest form of <u>pictographs</u>. Scribes in the region of Mesopotamia used it to help them keep records. Besides <u>government</u> records, scribes soon began to record <u>poems</u>, <u>literature</u> and their <u>history</u>.</p>

# The Code of Hammurabi

By \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.E. Mesopotamia is run by a group of people called \_\_\_\_\_. A capital was set up in a city called \_\_\_\_\_. This city was located near present day \_\_\_\_\_, Iraq.

Babylon was run by a ruler named \_\_\_\_\_. King Hammurabi established the world's first written set of \_\_\_\_\_, also know as a \_\_\_\_\_. These laws were based on old \_\_\_\_\_ laws. Hammurabi had his laws carved onto huge black stones called \_\_\_\_\_ which would were placed throughout Babylon for the \_\_\_\_\_ to see. The point of the law was to keep the \_\_\_\_\_ from taking \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_. Many of the punishments were based on the idea that the punishment should \_\_\_\_\_ the crime. This is referred to as the "\_\_\_\_\_ for an \_\_\_\_\_" principle. There were many different types of laws. There were laws about disputes involving \_\_\_\_\_, criminal, \_\_\_\_\_, military and \_\_\_\_\_ law.

Types of Laws	
Civil	
Criminal	
Trade	
Military	
Family	

## Flocabulary - The Fertile Crescent

### A Sumerian:

We're chilling like it's summer, in our \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inventing the arch, we put it on our city gates.  
 We built the temples, \_\_\_\_\_,  
 We're swimming when it's very hot,  
 In the \_\_\_\_\_ and Euphrates, baby.  
 In the Tigris and Euphrates, baby.  
 In the Tigris and \_\_\_\_\_, baby.  
 Each city is unique, we don't have to wear a uniform,  
 But when we're writing it, we write it in \_\_\_\_\_.

### Sargon:

I roll through, invading them; I'm Sargon the Great.  
 Empire builder for the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Hammurabi:

Sorry Sargon, your empire couldn't last,  
 I babble on these tracks, put \_\_\_\_\_ on the maps.

I'm \_\_\_\_\_, you can call me Papi,  
 Made a strict code, 'cause your laws were sloppy.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ code matches tooth for tooth,  
 Poke an eye out and get yours poked out too.

### An Assyrian:

We're the \_\_\_\_\_, assassins,

Seriously dangerous when we're blasting, we took your men captive.  
 Burnt \_\_\_\_\_, built a library instead,  
 With that old book: Epic of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 What? We're in that \_\_\_\_\_.

*Sargon, you smell, need some Herbal Essence.  
 I keep it quick, like a turtle's breakfast,  
 Time's up, better learn your lessons.*

### Nebuchadnezzar:

Nobody ruled better, I'm Nebuchadnezzar,  
 Me and my \_\_\_\_\_ are sharper than cheddar.  
 We're so holy like Swiss \_\_\_\_\_,  
 One day my wife said, "Neb, I miss trees.  
 This city life is too hard for me,  
 All I see is brown, baby, I need garden-green."  
 So I built the Hanging \_\_\_\_\_ for my girl,  
 It's one of the seven \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.

### A Phoenician:

Phoenicians: Where we get our \_\_\_\_\_ from.  
 Phoenicians: \_\_\_\_\_, and standing strong.  
 Phoenicians: We set sail on seas,  
 Built ships with ease, sail from Sidon to \_\_\_\_\_.

The best craftsmen, we make the best crafts,  
 We blow the most glass, we make the most cash.

Trade the glass and crafts, watch our \_\_\_\_\_ stack,  
 Dye cloth, people like, "I got to have that."

*What? We're in that Fertile Crescent,  
 Sargon, you smell, need some Herbal Essence.  
 I keep it quick, like a turtle's breakfast,  
 Time's up, better learn your lessons.*

### A Hebrew:

You don't have to \_\_\_\_\_, Lydians made cents,  
 'Cause Lydians printed coins like a mint.  
 Between Egypt and Babylon, we're the \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tribes and crews; today we'd be called \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Wandering the desert, avoiding bandits,  
 Till Moses showed us Ten \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Divided into 12 tribes, we got lost,  
 Until King Saul finally reunited us.  
 Next, David built Jerusalem,  
 In the \_\_\_\_\_, he defeats Goliath, ya heard of him?  
 His son \_\_\_\_\_ built the temple,  
 we weren't saved,  
 Chaldeans invaded and made us slaves.

*What? We're in that Fertile Crescent,  
 Sargon, you smell, need some Herbal Essence.  
 I keep it quick, like a turtle's breakfast,  
 Time's up, better learn your lessons*

# The Hebrew People

## How Many Gods?

When religion first developed, most people believed in many gods. Often, there were gods for water, land, sea, air, and other natural forces. Belief in many gods is called polytheism, and people who believe in many gods are polytheistic. However, there was one early religion that did away with many gods in exchange for one all-powerful god. The Hebrew people were monotheistic, believing in only one god.

## The Story of the Hebrews

Around 1800 BC, a man named Abraham lived in Sumer, in the city-state of Ur. Abraham rejected the polytheism practiced by the Sumerians and believed in only one god which he called Yahweh. The belief in only one god is called monotheism.

## The Deal

Abraham made an agreement or covenant with Yahweh in which he would obey Yahweh who would in return provide protection for Abraham and his descendants. Yahweh commanded Abraham to move his family from Mesopotamia to Canaan. Canaan means "promised land". Another modern name is Jerusalem. One day, God tested Abraham's loyalty to God. God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as proof of his devotion to God. Abraham was upset, but followed God's command. At the last second, God sent an angel to stop Abraham, as he had proved his loyalty. The spot where Abraham almost sacrificed Isaac is believed to be located in what is today Jerusalem. Eventually, the Jews would build a temple on that spot.

Hebrew conception of God	Polytheistic view
God is <u>universal</u> and is <u>superior</u> to nature. Nature is <u>not</u> to be worshiped but is part of God's <u>creation</u> .	Gods are <u>limited</u> to specific locations and to <u>nature</u> . Forces of nature were <u>worshipped</u> as gods.
God is <u>eternal</u> .	Gods were <u>created</u> and may be <u>destroyed</u> .
God is subject to <u>nothing</u> . He is <u>supreme</u> .	Gods were <u>subject</u> to human needs and desires: <u>hunger</u> , <u>pain</u> , illness...

## Leaving Canaan

Around 1650 B.C. the Hebrew people are forced to leave Canaan because of drought and famine. They headed west to nearby Egypt, where they were welcomed as neighbors. Eventually though, the Egyptians enslaved the Hebrews. This lasted until sometime between 1300 and 1200 B.C. when they were led back home, out of slavery by a Hebrew named Moses. Moses was an adopted member of the Egyptian royal family, raised unaware of this Hebrew roots. Once he learned of who he really was, he begged Egyptian leaders for the release of the Hebrews. Upon their emancipation, Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt back to Canaan. This flight of the Hebrews back to Canaan is called the Exodus.

## The Ten Commandments

On the way back home, Moses stopped to rest on Mt. Sinai, and there God gave Moses the law he wished his people to obey. Those laws made up the Ten Commandments and were originally inscribed on two stone tablets. These commandments are the basis of civil (how to deal with each other) and religious (how to deal with god) law for Hebrews. Hebrews believed that if they obeyed these rules God would protect them.

## Holy Books

The holy book for the Jewish people is called the Torah. This contains the first five books of the bible, or the first five books of the Old Testament for Christians. It includes the story of the origins of humanity and the Hebrew people and the laws for the Hebrew people.

## Tough Times for Jews

Eventually, the Jewish kingdom was conquered by neighbors. Babylonians first, eventually the Romans conquered the Hebrews, leading the Hebrews being to being without a home. Spread out across the Earth, Jews settled in many places, but were not welcome in Canaan. The Jews being spread out, or dispersed across the planet is called the diaspora.

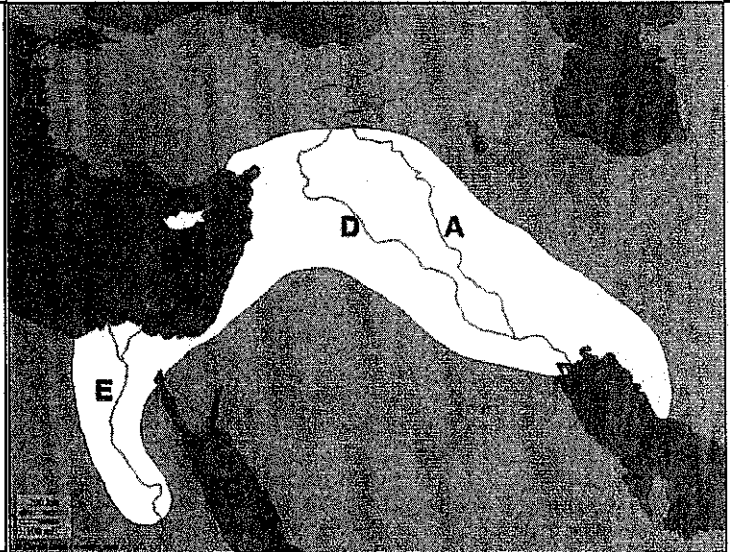


# Study Guide

Word	Definition

**Part 2:** Place the correct letter from the map on the corresponding geographic feature:

- **MEDITERRANEAN SEA -**
- **RED SEA -**
- **TIGRIS RIVER -**
- **EUPHRATES RIVER -**
- **NILE RIVER -**



**Part 3:** Provide at least one example for each aspect of civilization for the Mesopotamian culture in spaces below

Cities & Food Supply	Social Class & Job Specialization	Government & Public Works	Technology & Contributions	Culture, Art & Architecture	Complex Religion & Beliefs	Writing System & Communication

**Part 4:** Summarize the story of the Hebrew people into 3 sentences. Choose only the 3 most important events to tell your story.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 5: (Sneak Preview)** Review the written response questions before you choose one to answer on the test. Brainstorm and plan out how you will answer one of the questions below:

1. What problems did the people of the Fertile Crescent face and how did they solve them?
2. How did Hammurabi promote cooperation within his empire?
3. What were the essential beliefs of Judaism?
4. How did Mesopotamians cope with a lack of

Research Simulation Task and Literary Analysis Task

Construct Measured	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	Score Point 0	Teacher Scores
Reading/ Comprehension of Key Ideas and Details  <i>each text support claim</i>	<b>COMPREHENSION/ANALYSIS/EVIDENCE:</b>					Out of 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Full comprehension</b> of ideas Writing responds directly to prompt(s) Answers are stated explicitly (claim) and inferentially (explanation of evidence)</li> <li>• <b>Accurate analysis</b> - *theme is accurate; -- <i>claim</i> *development of <del>characters</del> <i>claim</i> is used to support the <del>theme</del> <i>prompt</i> *Explained whether characters were trustworthy or untrustworthy</li> <li>• <b>Effective and convincing</b> textual evidence</li> <li>• Direct quotes</li> <li>• References of where quotes found</li> <li>• Quotes are quality quotes from text that support the claim</li> <li>• Evidence from <del>both</del> <i>all</i> texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Comprehension</b> of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially</li> <li>• <b>Mostly accurate</b> analysis</li> <li>• <b>Adequate</b> textual evidence</li> <li>• Evidence from BOTH texts</li> <li>• Probably using quotes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Basic comprehension</b> of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially claim is present, but maybe not complex or entirely clear</li> <li>• <b>Generally accurate</b> analysis - theme is discussed; character development is discussed, but maybe not entirely correct</li> <li>• <b>Basic</b> textual evidence - evidence from BOTH texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited comprehension</b> of ideas stated explicitly and/or inferentially</li> <li>• <b>Minimally accurate</b> analysis</li> <li>• <b>Limited</b> textual evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No comprehension</b> of ideas</li> <li>• <b>Inaccurate or no</b> analysis</li> <li>• <b>Little to no</b> textual evidence</li> </ul>	
Writing/ Written Expression	<b>DEVELOPMENT/REASONING/EVIDENCE:</b>					Out of 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effective and comprehensive</b> development of the claim or topic Claim stated clearly in the introduction</li> <li>• <b>Clear and convincing</b> Claim addresses the prompt Claim is logically-based on the text</li> <li>• <b>Relevant textual evidence</b> (2 or more) pieces of textual evidence are cited from text.</li> <li>• Reasoning- Each detail must include student analysis, commentary or explanation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mostly effective</b> development of the claim or topic</li> <li>• Claim is on topic, clear, and gets developed for the most part</li> <li>• <b>Clear</b> reasoning</li> <li>• <b>Relevant textual</b> evidence</li> <li>• evidence from BOTH texts is used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some</b> development of the claim or topic Claim is there, but maybe not explicit and not fully explained</li> <li>• Claim is on topic</li> <li>• <b>Some</b> reasoning and <b>text-based</b> evidence</li> <li>• There might be examples or even quotes, but not a lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minimal</b> development</li> <li>• <b>Limited</b> reasoning and <b>text-based</b> evidence;</li> <li>• <b>OR:</b> is developed but <b>does not address the prompt</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undeveloped</b></li> </ul>	
	<b>COHERENCE/CLARITY:</b>					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Purposeful</b> coherence, clarity, and cohesion</li> <li>• <b>Easy to follow</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ organized into paragraphs</li> <li>◦ paragraphs stay focused.</li> <li>◦ topic sentences are used</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coherent</b>, clear, and cohesive</li> <li>• <b>Fairly easy to follow</b></li> <li>• Does not flow as well as a 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some</b> coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion</li> <li>• Progression of ideas <b>usually discernible but not obvious</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited</b> coherence, clarity, and/or cohesion</li> <li>• <b>Somewhat unclear</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lacking</b> coherence, clarity, and cohesion</li> </ul>	Out of 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ supporting details support the main idea</li> </ul>					
	<b>STYLE:</b>					Out of 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Effective</b> style. Writing reflects a strong and consistent voice Word choice Sentence structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mostly effective</b> style while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Somewhat effective</b>, generally attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited effectiveness</b>, with limited awareness of the norms of the discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inappropriate</b> style, with little to no awareness of the norms of the discipline</li> </ul>	
Writing/ Knowledge of Language and Conventions	<b>COMMAND OF CONVENTIONS:</b>					Out of 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Full command</b> of the conventions of standard English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some command</b> of the conventions of standard English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Limited command</b> of the conventions of standard English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No command</b> of the conventions of standard English</li> </ul>	
	<b>MECHANICS/CLARITY:</b>					Out of 3
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Few minor errors</b> in mechanics, grammar, and usage</li> <li>• <b>Meaning is clear</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>May have errors</b> in mechanics, grammar, and usage that <b>occasionally impede understanding</b></li> <li>• <b>Meaning is generally clear</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Errors</b> in mechanics, grammar, and usage <b>often impede understanding.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Frequent and varied errors</b> in mechanics, grammar, and usage <b>impede understanding</b></li> </ul>	