

# Early River Valley Civilizations, 3500 B.C.–450 B.C.

## Previewing Main Ideas

**INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT** The earliest civilizations formed on fertile river plains. These lands faced challenges, such as seasonal flooding and a limited growing area.

**Geography** *What rivers helped sustain the four river valley civilizations?*

**POWER AND AUTHORITY** Projects such as irrigation systems required leadership and laws—the beginnings of organized government. In some societies, priests controlled the first governments. In others, military leaders and kings ruled.

**Geography** *Look at the time line and the map. In which empire and river valley area was the first code of laws developed?*

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY** Early civilizations developed bronze tools, the wheel, the sail, the plow, writing, and mathematics. These innovations spread through trade, wars, and the movement of peoples.

**Geography** *Which river valley civilization was the most isolated? What factors contributed to that isolation?*

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

#### eEdition

- Interactive Maps
- Interactive Visuals
- Interactive Primary Sources



#### INTERNET RESOURCES

Go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com) for:

- Research Links
- Internet Activities
- Primary Sources
- Chapter Quiz
- Maps
- Test Practice
- Current Events



**3000 B.C.**

◀ City-states form in Sumer, Mesopotamia. (bronze head of an Akkadian ruler)

**WORLD**

**3500 B.C.**

**2500 B.C.**



**2660 B.C.**

Egypt's Old Kingdom develops. (Egyptian scribe statue)



**1792 B.C.**

Hammurabi develops code of laws for Babylonian Empire.

**1027 B.C.**

Zhou Dynasty forms in China. (Zhou bronze vessel)



**1500 B.C.**

**500 B.C.**

**1750 B.C.**

Indus Valley civilization declines. (fragment of a Harappan pot)

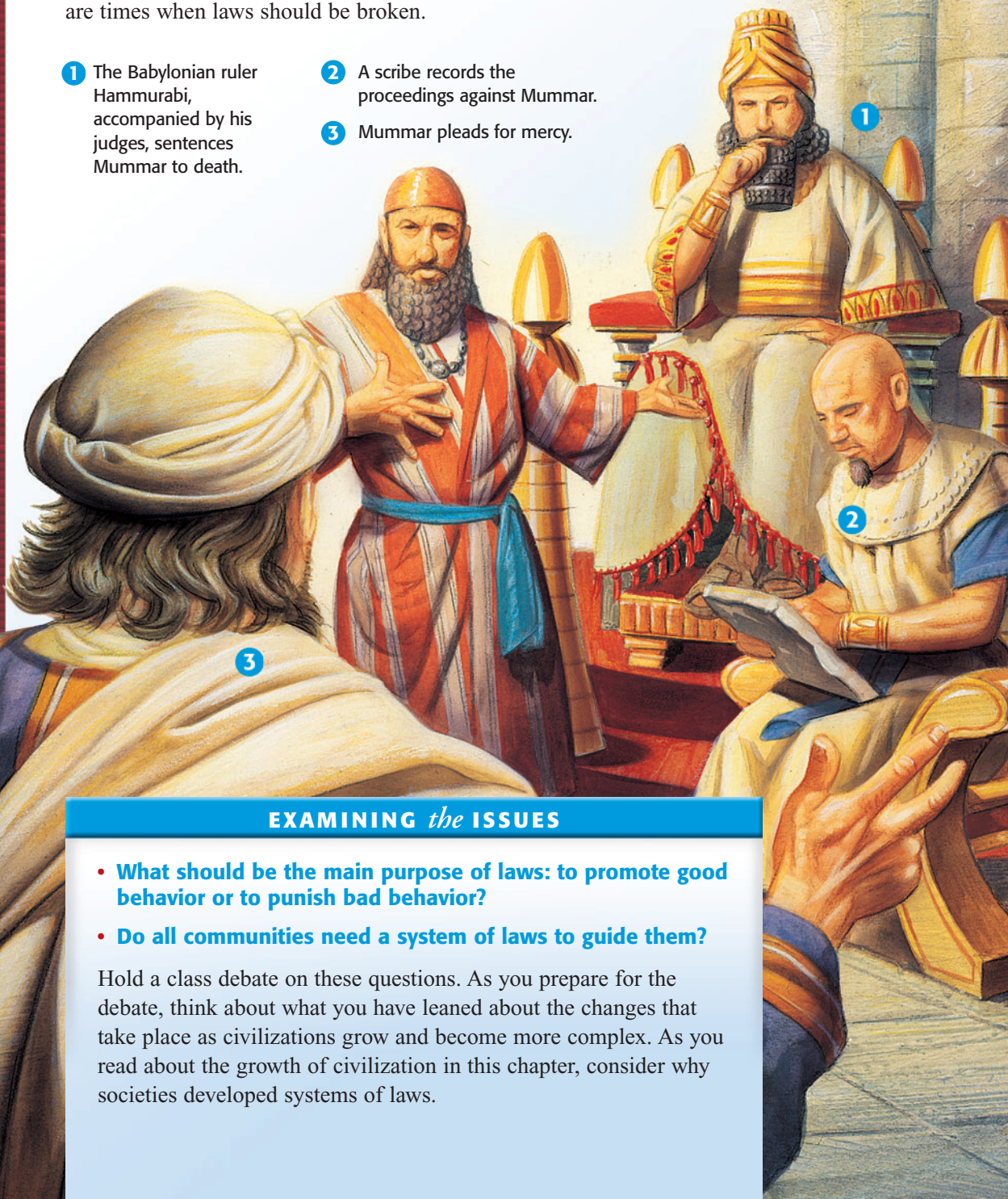


## Why do communities need laws?

The harvest has failed and, like many others, you have little to eat. There are animals in the temple, but they are protected by law. Your cousin decides to steal one of the pigs to feed his family. You believe that laws should not be broken and try to persuade him not to steal the pig. But he steals the pig and is caught.

The law of the Babylonian Empire—Hammurabi's Code—holds people responsible for their actions. Someone who steals from the temple must repay 30 times the cost of the stolen item. Because your cousin is unable to pay this fine, he is sentenced to death. You begin to wonder whether there are times when laws should be broken.

- 1 The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi, accompanied by his judges, sentences Mummar to death.
- 2 A scribe records the proceedings against Mummar.
- 3 Mummar pleads for mercy.



### EXAMINING *the* ISSUES

- **What should be the main purpose of laws: to promote good behavior or to punish bad behavior?**
- **Do all communities need a system of laws to guide them?**

Hold a class debate on these questions. As you prepare for the debate, think about what you have learned about the changes that take place as civilizations grow and become more complex. As you read about the growth of civilization in this chapter, consider why societies developed systems of laws.