

## Rise of the Akkadian Empire

- Another society developed along the Tigris and Euphrates.
- It was created by the Akkadians which they lived just north of Sumer, but were not Sumerians.
- They spoke a different language than the Sumerians.
- Despite their differences the Akkadians and Sumerians lived in peace for many years.

# Sargon's Empire, c. 2330 BC



**ASIA  
MINOR**

Legend:

- Empire of Sargon (Purple)
- Sumer (Orange)
- Ancient coastline of Persian Gulf (Dashed line)

Scale:

0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers



**GEOGRAPHY  
SKILLS**

## INTERPRETING MAPS

**Location** How far west did Sargon's empire stretch?



## Rise of the Akkadian Empire

- That peace was broken in 2300 BC when the leader of Akkadian Sargon sought to extend the Akkadian territory.
- He built a new capital, Akkad, on the Euphrates River, near what is now the city of Baghdad.
- Sargon was the first ruler to have a permanent army that he used to launch a series of wars against neighboring kingdoms.



## BIOGRAPHY

### **Sargon**

Ruled 2334–2279 BC

According to legend, a gardener found a baby floating in a basket on a river and raised him as his own child. This baby later became the Akkadian emperor Sargon. As a young man, Sargon served Ur-Zababa, the king of Kish. Sargon later rebelled against the Sumerian ruler, took over his city, and built Akkad into a military power. He was among the first military leaders to use soldiers armed with bows and arrows. Sargon gained the loyalty of his soldiers by eating with them every day.



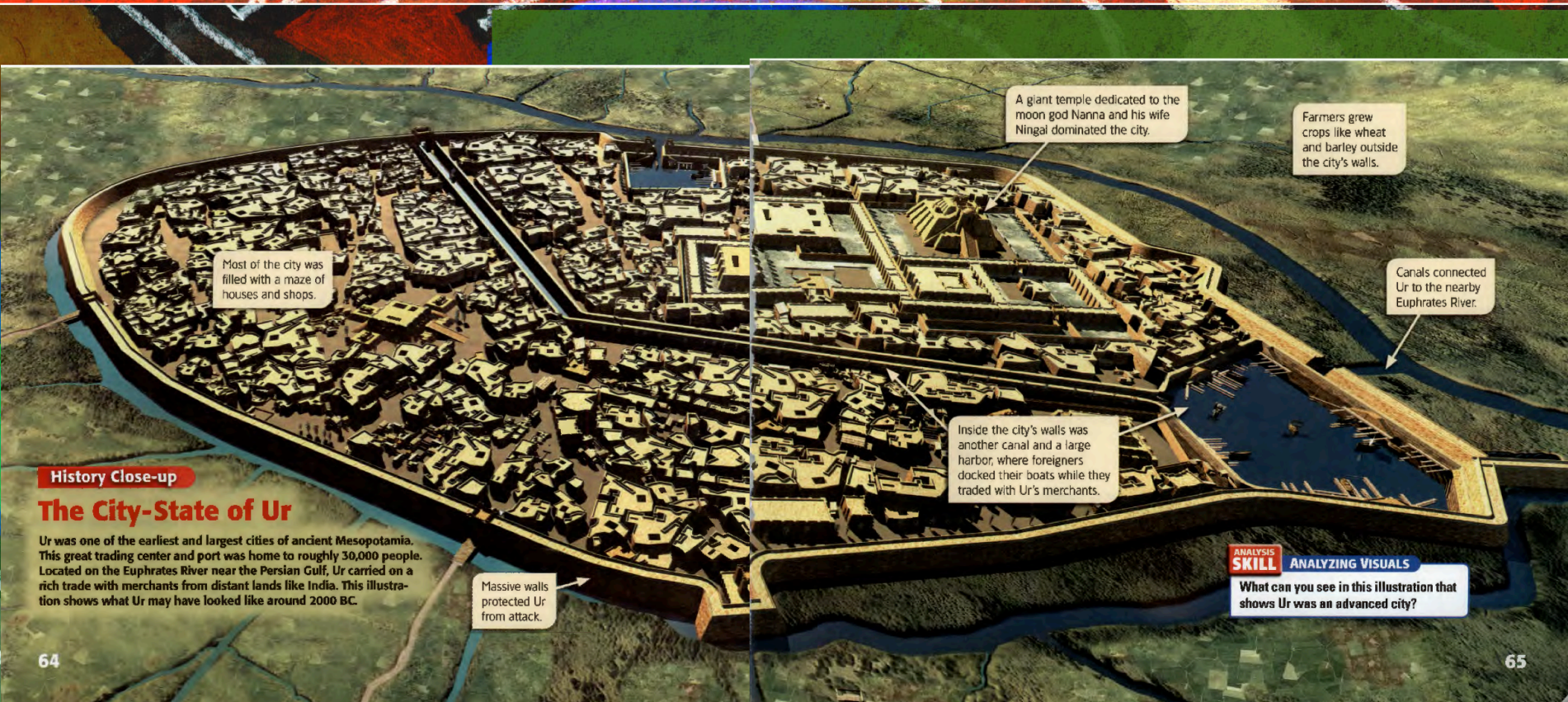
## Rise of the Akkadian Empire

- Sargon defeated all the city-states of Sumer.
- He also conquered northern Mesopotamia, finally bringing the entire region under his rule.
- With these conquests, Sargon established the world's first empire, or land with different territories and peoples under a single rule.
- The Akkadian empire stretched from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Sargon was emperor, or ruler of his empire for more than 50 years.



## Rise of the Akkadian Empire

- The empire lasted only a short time after his death.
- Eventually, however, the Sumerian city-state of Ur rebuilt its strength and conquered the rest of Mesopotamia.
- Political stability was restored.
- The Sumerians once again became the most powerful civilization in the region.



Most of the city was filled with a maze of houses and shops.

A giant temple dedicated to the moon god Nanna and his wife Ningal dominated the city.

Farmers grew crops like wheat and barley outside the city's walls.

Canals connected Ur to the nearby Euphrates River.

Inside the city's walls was another canal and a large harbor, where foreigners docked their boats while they traded with Ur's merchants.

Massive walls protected Ur from attack.

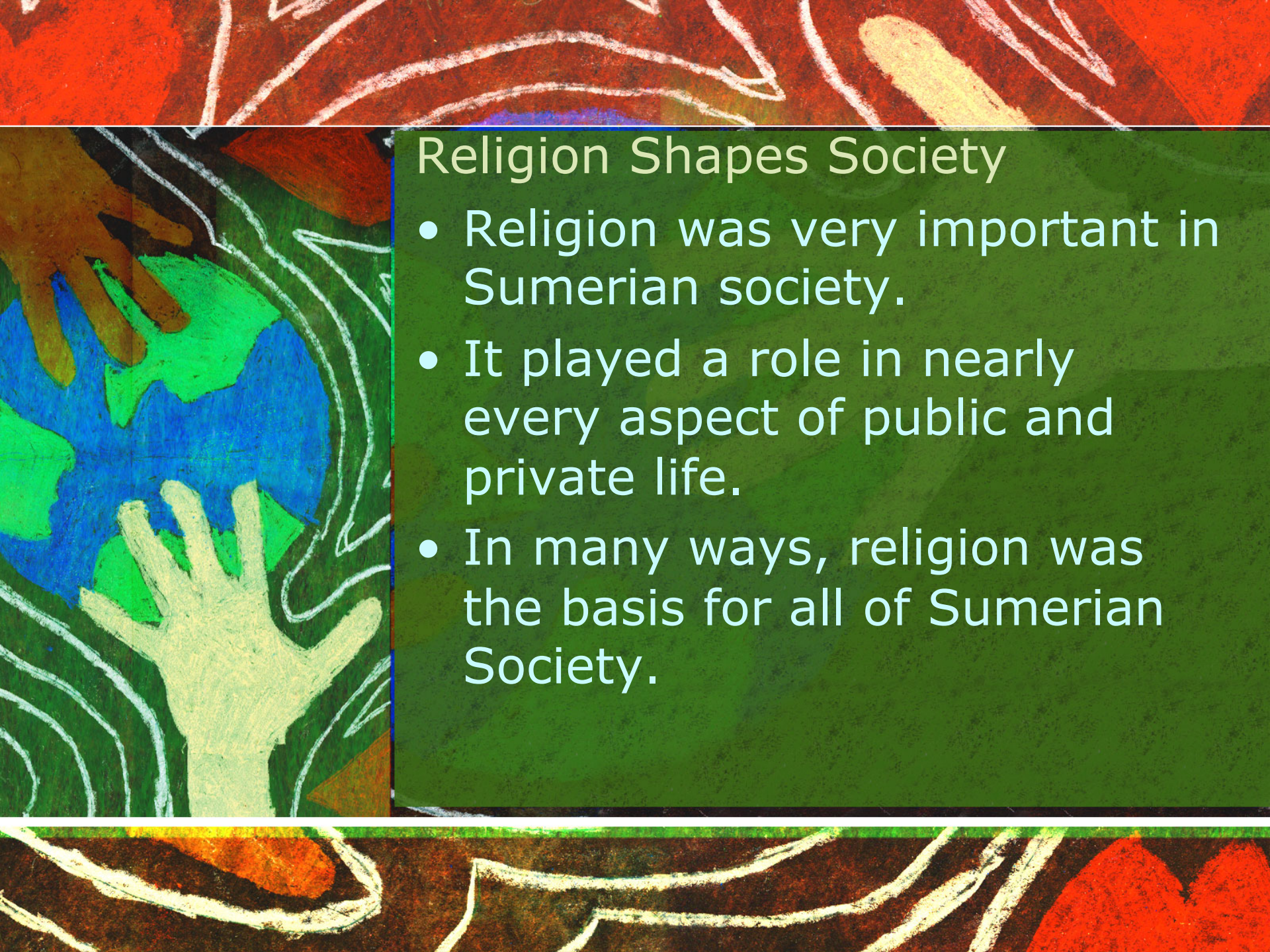
**History Close-up**

**The City-State of Ur**

Ur was one of the earliest and largest cities of ancient Mesopotamia. This great trading center and port was home to roughly 30,000 people. Located on the Euphrates River near the Persian Gulf, Ur carried on a rich trade with merchants from distant lands like India. This illustration shows what Ur may have looked like around 2000 BC.

**ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS**

What can you see in this illustration that shows Ur was an advanced city?

An abstract artwork featuring a central globe with green and blue continents and oceans. Two hands are shown: a brown hand at the top left and a white hand at the bottom center, both appearing to hold or support the globe. The background is dark green with white, wavy lines. The top and bottom of the image are framed by red and orange abstract patterns with white lines.

## Religion Shapes Society

- Religion was very important in Sumerian society.
- It played a role in nearly every aspect of public and private life.
- In many ways, religion was the basis for all of Sumerian Society.





## Religion Shapes Society

- Sumerians were Polytheistic (the worship of many gods)
- God controlled forces of nature.
- Gods favored truth and justice but were responsible for violence and suffering as well.
- Each city-state had their own gods and goddesses, but the Sun god was the most important.

## Religion Shapes Society

- They believed that the gods would reward them for good service.
- They also believed that the gods would punish the people who made them angry.
- Life after death was an extension of life.





Anu – father of gods and god of the sky  
(similar to Zeus)



Enlil – god of the air

Utu – sun god;  
lord of truth and justice



# Ziggurats

- Located in the city center – “Center for learning and religion”
- Large and most important pyramid shaped structures.
- First build in 2200 B.C.
- Temples of the main gods
- Thought to be connected to heaven and earth.

