Aim: Were the Ancient River Valley Civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt more similar or different?
Compare/Contrast

- Finding similarities and difference between two or more events, people, places or ideas
Categorization Strategies

• When comparing and contrasting, consider using a few of these categories to provide a solid comparison.

• Political
• Economic
• Social
• Cultural
• Religious
• Geographic
Mesopotamia

- **Mesopotamia**
- “The land between the rivers”
  - Rivers were NOT a reliable source of water
    - Ran dry in summer
    - Flooded in spring

- Create irrigation systems - built dams, canals, and ditches
Government

- **Theocracies** - kings served as both government leaders AND high priests
- **City-states**
  - governed themselves
  - An independent political unit with its own government
  - protected by defensive walls
  - Engaged in near-constant wars
Sumer

- The first civilization to develop in Mesopotamia (5,500 B.C.E.)
- Sumerians shared common culture, language, and religion
Cities

- **Ziggurat** - was the center of city life
  - Priests conducted rituals & sacrifices to city gods
  - Served as storage for grains, fabrics, gems
Writing System

• **Cuneiform** = Sumerian system of writing

• Symbols represented complex ideas
• Scribes were trained to read & write documents and stories
  • Epic of Gilgamesh - oldest story in the world
Religion

• **polytheism** - belief in more than one god
  • Each city-state had its own god
  • Negative outlook on life and the afterlife
  • Believed gods were selfish and had no regard for humans
Compare/Contrast

• List three similarities between ancient Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.
• List two differences between ancient Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.
• Why do you think these civilizations failed in the long run?