

MAIN IDEAS

- 1 **Science and Technology** Assyria built a military machine that was greatly feared by others in the region.
- 2 **Government** Assyria used several different methods to control its empire.
- 3 **Government** The Chaldeans replaced the Assyrians as the main power in Mesopotamia and other parts of the Fertile Crescent.

TAKING NOTES

Reading Skill:

Understanding Cause and Effect

Finding causes and effects will help you understand the events in Lesson 2. Look for the effect of each cause listed in the chart. Fill in the effects on a chart of your own.

Causes	Effects
Assyrian military machine	
Cruelty to captured peoples	
Huge empires	



Skillbuilder Handbook, page R26



▲ **Jeweled Pendant** This ornament for a necklace is made from gold and precious stones. It shows a sacred palm tree.

Words to Know

Understanding the following words will help you read this lesson:

battering ram a large wooden beam used to knock down walls or gates (page 119)

The battering ram bashed open the fortress gate.

treasury the place in a country or empire where money is kept and managed (page 120)

The emperor was pleased that so much money was flowing into the treasury.

loom to stand high above (page 122)

The walls of the city loomed above the plains below.

wonder a very unusual or remarkable thing (page 122)

Many of the wonders of the ancient world no longer exist.

exile

tribute

Hanging Gardens
of Babylon

Assyria Rules the Fertile Crescent

Build on What You Know In the last lesson, you learned that early empires in Mesopotamia conquered land that stretched into the Fertile Crescent. These empires needed strong armies and wise leaders to hold them together. When the Babylonian Empire fell, another took its place—Assyria.

A Mighty Military Machine

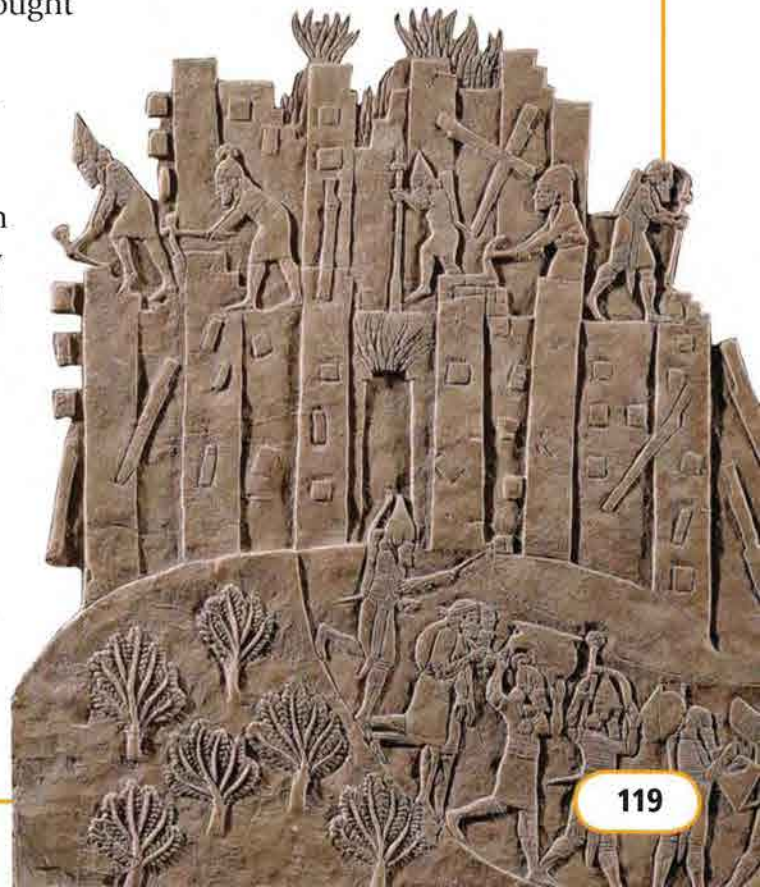
1 ESSENTIAL QUESTION How was Assyria able to build an empire?

Assyria was located in northern Mesopotamia, an area of rolling hills. To protect their lands, the rulers built a powerful army and set out to control the neighboring lands. The Assyrian army proved they were second to none.

A Powerful Army The Assyrians fought fiercely on foot, on horseback, and with chariots. Assyrian soldiers used the latest inventions for war. They carried iron swords and iron-tipped spears. Few of their enemies had iron weapons. The Assyrians attacked city walls with battering rams. They used ladders to scale the walls of cities. They even dug tunnels under city walls to get soldiers inside.

Once inside the city, they slaughtered the inhabitants. One Assyrian king boasted that he had destroyed 89 cities, 820 villages, and had burned the city of Babylon. As a result, the Assyrians were greatly feared by other peoples.

Stone Carving
Assyrian warriors
attack the walls and
burn a neighboring
city. ▼



Harsh Treatment of Captured People The Assyrians were cruel to the peoples they defeated. Enemies who surrendered were allowed to choose a leader. But those who refused to submit to Assyrian control were taken captive. The Assyrians killed or made slaves of captives. They speared enemy leaders and burned their cities. They sent captured peoples into **exile**. This means that they forced people to move from their homelands to other lands, often far away.

REVIEW Why were the Assyrians feared by their enemies?

Assyria Builds a Huge Empire

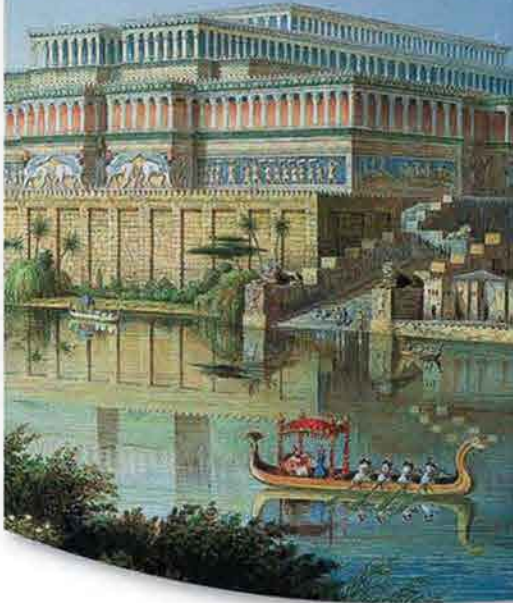
2 ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did Assyria control its empire?

Between 850 and 650 B.C., the Assyrians conquered many lands. They added Syria, Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine to the empire. Assyria reached its peak of power under the rule of Ashurbanipal (AH•shur•BAH•nuh•PAHL) from 668 to 627 B.C. Under his leadership, the Assyrians controlled almost all of the Fertile Crescent.

A Huge Empire The Assyrian Empire grew so large that it needed to be very well organized. The Assyrians governed the conquered lands by choosing a governor or native king from that land to rule under their direction. The Assyrians provided the army that protected all of the lands.

Each ruler in a conquered land had to send **tribute** to the Assyrian emperor. This meant that the ruler had to pay for the protection given by the Assyrian army. Tribute brought money and goods into the empire's treasury. If any ruler failed to pay tribute, the army destroyed cities in that land. People of the land were forced into exile.





Ashurbanipal (c. 668–627 B.C.)

Ashurbanipal, an Assyrian king, sent people to find and bring back copies of writings from throughout the empire. His collection contained over 20,000 cuneiform tablets. The collection included dictionaries, myths, and stories. He kept writings on special subjects such as science, geography, medicine, and religion. He even had some reports by spies.

Ashurbanipal set up a huge library in the capital at Nineveh (shown at the left). The library organized the collected texts by subject, like books in a modern library. However, Nineveh's enemies leveled the library. When archaeologists dug up the library's ruins, they found tablets. The tablets became the main source of information about ancient Mesopotamia.

◀ This is an artist's idea of what the library in Nineveh looked like.

The Assyrians made many enemies by their cruel actions. The leaders worried that exiled peoples might try to gather a force strong enough to defeat the Assyrians. They were right. The Assyrians had to put down many revolts.

Assyria Crumbles In 609 B.C., the Assyrian Empire fell. Two of its enemies, the Medes (meedz) and the Chaldeans (kal•DEE•uhnz), joined forces to defeat the Assyrians. These forces completely destroyed the city of Nineveh by burning it to the ground. For centuries afterward, only mounds of earth marked the location of the once great capital.

REVIEW Why did the Assyrians receive tribute?

A New Babylonian Empire

3 ESSENTIAL QUESTION Who replaced the Assyrian Empire?

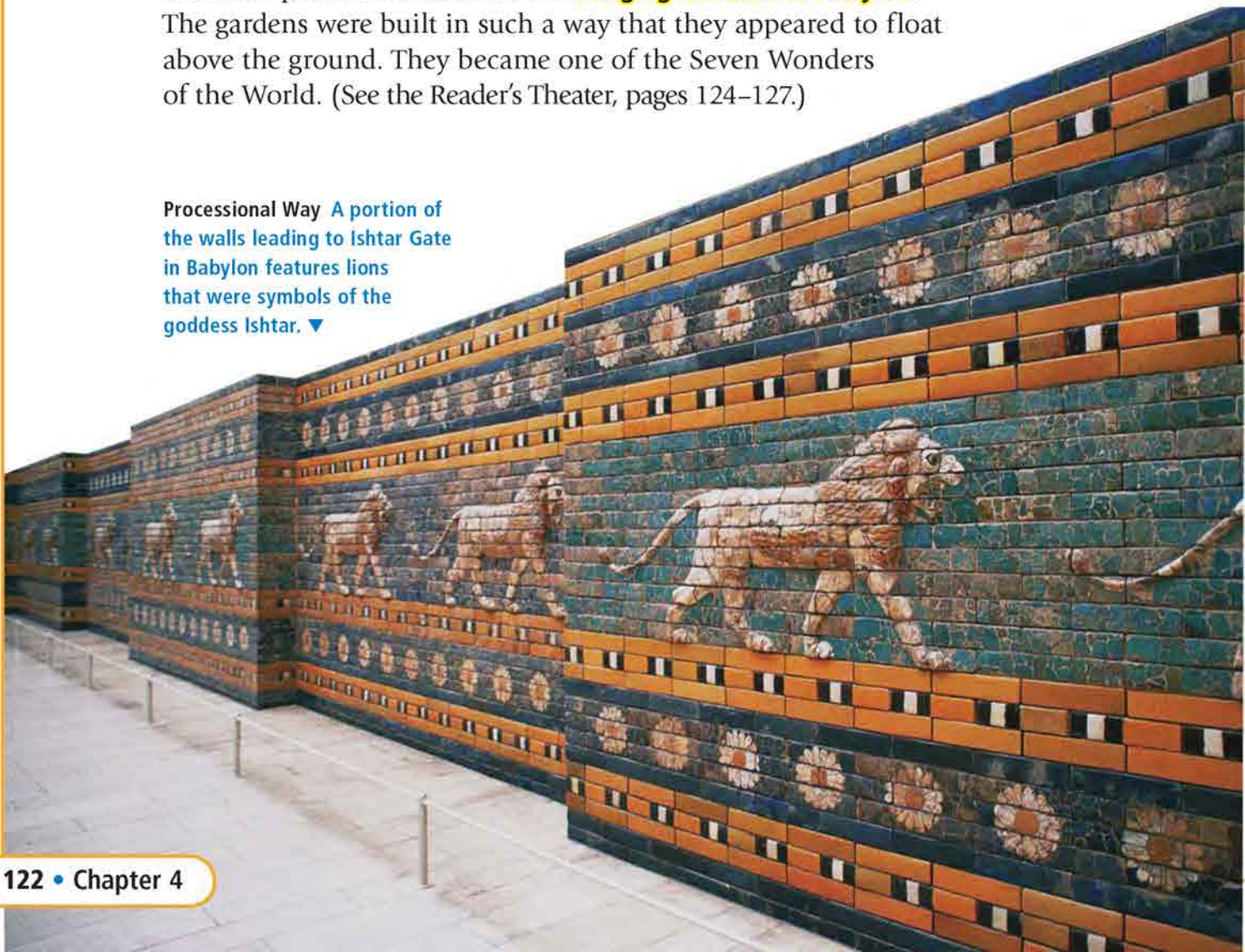
In time, Assyria's neighbors, the Chaldeans, ruled much of the former Assyrian empire. The city of Babylon became the capital of the Chaldeans' new empire. Remember that Babylon was the capital of the first Babylonian empire. Sometimes the Chaldeans are called the New Babylonians.

Chaldeans Take Assyrian Lands The Chaldean Empire reached its peak between 605 and 562 B.C. The Chaldeans were led by Nebuchadnezzar II (NEHB•uh•kuhd•NEHZ•uhr) who drove the Egyptians out of Syria and captured trading cities on the Mediterranean coast.

Like the Assyrians, the Chaldeans faced revolts by captured people. The Hebrews, a group of people living in lands near the Mediterranean Sea coast, rebelled in 598 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar seized Jerusalem, which was the capital city of the Hebrews. The Hebrews' sacred temple there was destroyed. The Chaldeans held thousands of Hebrews captive in Babylon for about 50 years.

Height of Wealth and Power Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt the city of Babylon and constructed the huge, colorful Ishtar Gate. Processions into the city went through this gate. An enormous ziggurat loomed 300 feet above the city. Chaldean astronomers used the tower to study the skies. It is said that to please his wife, Nebuchadnezzar built an artificial mountain covered with trees and plants. It was called the **Hanging Gardens of Babylon**. The gardens were built in such a way that they appeared to float above the ground. They became one of the Seven Wonders of the World. (See the Reader's Theater, pages 124–127.)

Processional Way A portion of the walls leading to Ishtar Gate in Babylon features lions that were symbols of the goddess Ishtar. ▼



The Empire Fades Weak rulers followed Nebuchadnezzar II. In addition to the weak rulers, internal conflicts about religion upset and divided the Chaldeans. This made it easy for Cyrus of Persia to conquer the land. You will learn more about Cyrus in the next lesson.

REVIEW What were some features of the Chaldean capital of Babylon?



▲ Detail from the Ishtar Gate This is one of the mythical dragons found on the Ishtar Gate. The dragons were believed to dwell in ancient Babylon.

Lesson Summary

- The Assyrian military used new kinds of weapons and ways of fighting. The military was very cruel to captured peoples.
- The Assyrians' highly organized government controlled the conquered lands.
- The Chaldeans conquered Assyrian lands. Their empire reached its peak under Nebuchadnezzar II.

Why It Matters Now . . .

The Assyrian Empire showed that to control large areas of land with many people, an empire must have a highly organized government and a strong military.

2 Lesson Review

Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of exile tribute Hanging Gardens of Babylon

Using Your Notes

Understanding Cause and Effect Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. What caused Assyria to improve its methods of government?

Causes	Effects
Assyrian military machine	
Cruelty to captured peoples	
Huge empires	

Main Ideas

3. What tactics did the Assyrians use to defeat their enemies?
4. How did the Assyrians maintain control of their lands?
5. What happened to the Hebrews when they rebelled against the Chaldeans?

Critical Thinking

6. **Making Inferences** What can happen when a country follows a policy of cruelty toward captured peoples, as Assyria did?
7. **Comparing** In what ways were the Assyrians and the Chaldeans alike?



Homework Helper
ClassZone.com

Activity

Internet Activity Use the Internet to research the wonders of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar II. Create a guide for tourists.

INTERNET KEYWORDS: *Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar*

THE HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON

Background: The year is 580 B.C. The place: Babylon, an ancient city in what is now Iraq. The ruler, Nebuchadnezzar II, is currently the most powerful king in the region. To strengthen his power, he has married Amytis, a princess from a land called Media, which was located in present-day Iran.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Amytis: (uh•MIH•tuhs)
queen and wife of
Nebuchadnezzar II


Sammu: slave to the
royal family

Nebuchadnezzar II:
(NEHB•uh•kuhd•NEHZ•uhr)
King of the Chaldeans

Merodach:
(mih•ROH•DAK)
the royal architect

Essam: the royal
engineer

Narrator



Amytis: Sammu, did you bring my palm oil? My face is as dry as the desert wind in this dreadful land!

Sammu: Right here, my queen.

Narrator: Amytis has been very unhappy since King Nebuchadnezzar brought her from Media. She is a Median princess, and the king married her to help keep peace between the two lands. But Amytis is so miserable. If she insists on returning to Media, her father will not be pleased. Look, here come the king and the queen.

Amytis: You said that I would live in a paradise as your wife. But I think I left paradise when I left Media.

Nebuchadnezzar: But my queen, Babylon is one of the largest and most beautiful cities in the world. Look at the great city walls, the Tower of Babel, the paved boulevards.

Amytis: In the Median mountains where I lived, the breezes were comfortable. The trees provided cool shade and sweet fruit. It's so hot and dusty here. It's nothing like my beautiful Media!

Narrator: Nebuchadnezzar knew that he must please Amytis to keep peace with her father in Media. He hurries to speak with her.

Nebuchadnezzar: My sweet, what if I give you what you desire? Cool gardens, green trees, flowers, and clear water right here in Babylon. Will you stay?

Amytis: Of course. But how can you do that?

Nebuchadnezzar: (*boasting*) I am the most powerful king the world has known. I will find a way. Sammu, fetch my royal architect and engineer.

Sammu: Yes, my king.

Nebuchadnezzar: Merodach, I charge you to create a spectacular mountain garden, right here on the palace grounds. It must have trees and flowers and clear running water. Essam, you will take the plans and figure out how to make this work. Do you both understand?

Merodach and Essam: Yes, my king. It will be done.

Narrator: Months later the king, the royal architect, and the royal engineer go over the architect's plans.

(continued)

Merodach: We can build a huge tower with terraces that will be filled with dirt. We will import trees that grow in our queen's Median homeland: date palms, cypress, fig, and pomegranate. Perfumed flowers too. And we can clear spaces for shaded canopies to protect our fair queen from the midday sun. Of course, we will need something to keep evil spirits away from her precious soul. I propose guarding the stairway with giant statues of winged lions that have copies of your majesty's head. The gods themselves could not offer better protection.

Nebuchadnezzar: Her own green mountain, in the midst of this desert! Amytis would love that. Remember just one thing: it rarely rains here. We can irrigate our flat farmlands from the rivers, but how will we move water uphill to keep an entire forest alive?

Essam: *(smiling)* I've designed what I call a chain pump. My system uses a large wheel at the bottom of the "mountain," and one at the top. They are connected by a chain, from which hang many buckets for water. As slaves turn the



◀ Hanging Gardens This is an artist's idea of what the Hanging Gardens looked like.

bottom wheel, the chain dips buckets into an irrigation pool and carries them upward. At the top, the buckets dump into an upper pool with channels to carry water to every plant in the monument.

Nebuchadnezzar: Well done, both of you! Let's get started immediately.

Merodach: Your worship, these hanging gardens will probably be the most expensive building project ever. And the chain pump will need to be operated by shifts of men all day and night. It will require much gold and many slaves.

Nebuchadnezzar: Not a problem. Since I captured Jerusalem, we have a fresh supply of both gold and slaves.

Narrator: Nebuchadnezzar built his Hanging Gardens of Babylon, and they were called one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Nebuchadnezzar presented the gardens to Amytis.

Nebuchadnezzar: Amytis, my sweet, here are your new gardens. Now, perhaps, you will not want to go home to Media.

Amytis: Oh, my king! They are the most wonderful gardens ever!

Narrator: Amytis loves her human-made mountain, and spends almost all of her time

there. This has made life easier for the king. Nebuchadnezzar and Amytis enjoy relaxing in the gardens.

Amytis: Sammu, we need more pomegranates and dates in this basket. Go pick us some, then come back and fan me.

Sammu: Yes, my queen. Right away.

Amytis: My king, I think we should invite the Egyptian pharaoh for a royal visit. I want all the world to see and admire my beautiful gardens. They will be a vision of beauty for all eternity!

Narrator: Amytis was partially right. There was nothing like the Hanging Gardens of Babylon anywhere. But somewhere along the line they were destroyed, along with the Chaldean civilization. The only way you can see them now, my friends, is with your imagination.

Activities

- 1. TALK ABOUT IT** What do you think might have happened to the Hanging Gardens?
- 2. WRITE ABOUT IT** Write a new scene in which Amytis has a party for the Egyptian royal family to show off her Hanging Gardens of Babylon. What might guests see and do at such an elegant event?