

The City-States of Sumer

1. Proper Noun
2. Proper Noun

The City-States of Sumer

Most people in Sumer were farmers. They lived mainly in rural, or countryside, areas. The centers of Sumerian society, however, were the urban, or city, areas. The first cities in Sumer had about 10,000 residents. Over time, the cities grew. Historians think that by 2000 BC, some of _____ Proper noun _____ cities had more than 100,000 residents.

As a result, the basic political unit of Sumer combined the two parts. This unit was called a city-state. A city-state consisted of a city and all the countryside around it. The amount of countryside controlled by each city-state depended on its military strength. Stronger city-states controlled larger areas.

City-states in Sumer fought each other to gain more farmland. As a result of these conflicts, the city-states built up strong armies. Sumerians also built strong, thick walls around their cities for protection.

Individual city-states gained and lost power over time. By 3500 BC, a city-state known as Kish had become quite powerful. Over the next 1,000 years, the city-states of Uruk and Ur fought for dominance. One of _____ Proper noun _____ kings, known as Gilgamesh, became a legendary figure in Sumerian literature.