

The Classes of Sumer

Upper Class

The priests, landowners, and government officials controlled society in Sumer. They had more rights and privileges than any of the other groups. Their homes were large and luxurious with easy access to the center of town. Some houses were multiple stories, and inside the homes, the upper class had fineries such as mirrors and art.

Middle Class

Among the Middle Class were the common people who performed most of the work and other functions of society in Sumer. Craftspeople created the goods and materials needed for living in the civilization and the Merchants traded to allow the Sumerians to have many goods. Many were skilled in Sumer with metalworking quite common and the use of metals such as gold, silver, copper, and bronze allowed the Sumerians advanced warfare weapons and the farmers to have innovative farming tools for increased agriculture production. Also among the Middle Class were the farmers and the fishermen who lived on the outskirts of the town with small homes around which they farmed or fished to support the community with a variety of agricultural goods and seafood. The building of irrigation systems were also done by the Middle Class commoners, providing water to the civilization otherwise unavailable in other societies.

Slaves had no rights, choices, or property. They lived in the homes of their owners and worked the labor needed to support their owner's home.

The structure of Sumerian Society was very much based on the religious beliefs, government style, and job responsibilities of the people there. While there was very little equality or fairness in the lives of the Sumerians, it was an early civilization with many characteristics of society not enjoyed by those before them or by those of other, less developed civilizations.