SUMERIAN
ACHIEVEMENTS

Cylinder Seals

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/cultures/mesopotamia_gallery_05.shtml

The Invention of Writing

- The Sumerians invented many things that were passed onto other civilizations

- Perhaps the most important new invention was writing
  - Cuneiform – The world’s first writing system (invented by the Sumerians)
  - Sumerians wrote on clay tablets with a sharp tool called a stylus
Bisotun Inscription - Iran
THE INVENTION OF WRITING

- Writing was originally pictographs
  - Pictographs – Picture Symbols
- Writing in symbols is much more complicated
- Writing was originally created to keep track of business records
  - Writing was always done by a scribe
    - Scribe - Writer
The Invention of Writing

- Becoming a scribe was a way to move up in social class
- Eventually writing was done for laws, history, math, grammar, and literature
  - The Sumerians wrote some of the world’s first epics
  - Epic – Long poem that tells the story of a hero
    - The Epic of Gilgamesh
Advances and Inventions

- Sumerians invented the wheel
  - Used it for wheeled vehicles (carts and wagons)
- Sumerians invented the plow
  - Made farming a lot easier
- Sumerians invented a water clock to tell time
- Sumerians built sewers and bronze tools/weapons
MATH

- The Sumerians based their number system on 60
  - 60 minutes, 60 seconds
  - 360 degrees in a circle
- The Sumerians figured out how to find the area of rectangles and triangles
  - For farming fields
- The Sumerians made a 12-month calendar
Sumerians named thousands of plants, animals, and minerals

Sumerians produced some of the world’s first medicines
  – Also performed surgeries!

Sumerians recorded much of their medical knowledge on their clay tablets
ART AND ARCHITECTURE

- Sumerians were very good artists and architects
  - Architecture – The science of building
- Designed large palaces and ziggurats
  - Ziggurat – Pyramid-shaped temple tower
- Artists made sculptures out of ivory and rare wood
  - Mainly statues of gods
- Sumerians are also well-known for their cylinder seals
  - Showed ownership and property