

The Babylonians

Scene #	Description	Narration
1	Stars are showing in the night sky.	Now we're going back to the Babylonians. They were the original inventors of the signs of the zodiac. For the Babylonians, astrology was a very serious business. They had two important reasons for studying the stars. One was the need to regulate the calendar for the dating of commercial transactions, births, marriages, deaths, and all such records.
2	A tablet of a god is shown, followed by carvings of different Babylonian gods.	And the other was the idea that events on Earth were directly related to whether the gods were pleased or angry at what was going on below them. The Babylonians thought they could actually see what the gods were doing in the sky.
3	The calculations of the Babylonians are being shown as the narrator describes them.	<p>Now, in order to calculate where the stars would be in, say, three months' time, they had to know how to count, which they did. This is what their system of numbers looked like.</p> <p>No zero?</p> <p>What did you say?</p> <p>Oh, nothing, nothing.</p> <p>They were skilled mathematicians. They could calculate square and cube roots and do quadratic equations. And they had a value for pi. We used to think math began with the Greeks. We now know much of it came from the Babylonians at least 1,500 years earlier.</p>
4	Sample Sumerian writing is shown.	<p>So for math, we must add the Babylonians to the list of peoples we're indebted to.</p> <p>That's right.</p> <p>The Sumerians are the people we're probably most indebted to, for they were the first we know of to invent a system of writing. The earliest inscriptions we have date back 5,000 years.</p>

The Babylonians

		<p>And 500 years after that, scribes were some of the most valued members of society. They recorded everything, from maps, medical textbooks, and math problems to precepts in law and business dealing. Yes. Babylonians would be lost without their scribes. Apart from the priests, it was they who really made the wheels go round.</p> <p>And talking of wheels, they invented them.</p> <p>Before anyone else?</p>
5	A statue showing a person on a cart with wheels is displayed.	<p>So far as we know. It could have come from the potter's wheel, which they were using nearly 5,500 years ago.</p> <p>I wonder if they realize what a huge step forward they'd taken with it.</p> <p>Who knows?</p>