

Judaism



The Context

LESSON 48 The Historical and Geographical Background of Judaism

GROUNDWORK

In this lesson we plan to:

- explore the historical and geographical background to life at the time of the foundation of Judaism.

DIGGING DEEPER

How did the historical and geographical background at the time of the foundation of Judaism affect the people?



Key Concepts

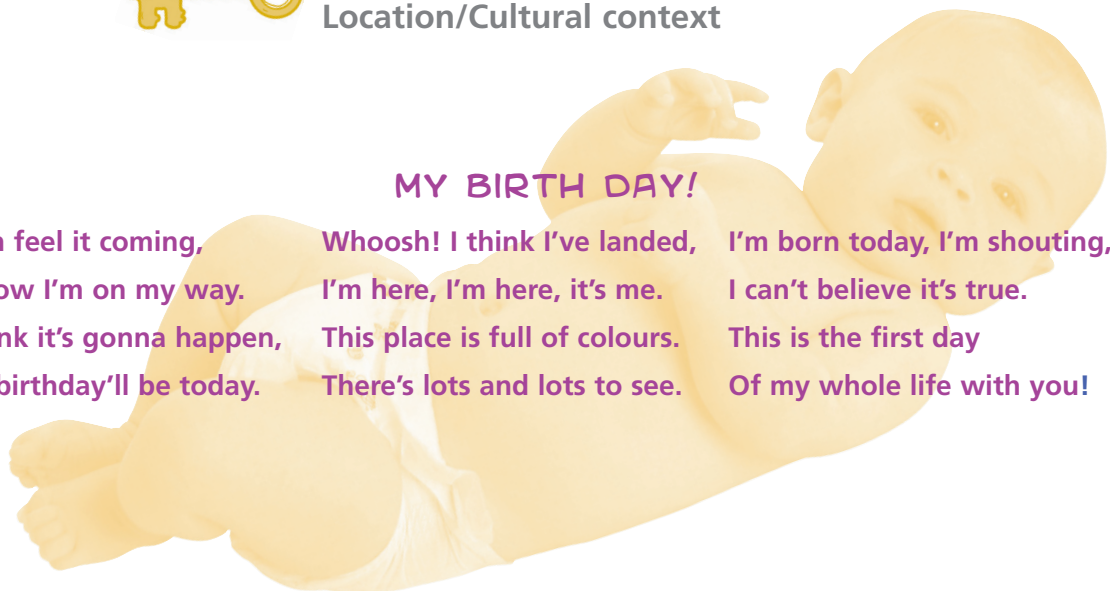
Location/Cultural context

MY BIRTH DAY!

I can feel it coming,
I know I'm on my way.
I think it's gonna happen,
My birthday'll be today.

Whoosh! I think I've landed,
I'm here, I'm here, it's me.
This place is full of colours.
There's lots and lots to see.

I'm born today, I'm shouting,
I can't believe it's true.
This is the first day
Of my whole life with you!



Location and Cultural Context

Imagine that you want to tell everyone about the place where you were born. Draw a map of your county, with the main towns marked and named. Include any rivers or mountains in your map. Then indicate the town in which you were born. You have now shown the **location** or place of your birth!

Now go a step further and give some details of what life is like in the country of your birth. You might like to include the following information in your account:

- The name of the political party that leads the government.
- The number one hit single.
- The most fashionable item of clothing for your age-group today.
- The cost of a newspaper or magazine.
- Two popular television programmes.
- The typical climate.
- The world religion(s) practised in your area.
- The kinds of jobs people have.
- The way people spend their free time.

Such information gives us a picture of the society and culture in which you live. We call this the **cultural context**.

The Origins of Judaism

Location

Judaism began almost four thousand years ago in a large area of land in the Middle East known as the Fertile Crescent. It stretches from the ancient city of Ur in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), where Abraham was born, up and around an arc to Haran (where he began his journey to the Promised Land) and down to the land of Canaan (later to be known as Palestine). Three very important rivers water the Fertile Crescent: the Nile in Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia.



KNOW HOW

Study the map opposite to find the location of the following places:

- The city of Ur
- Haran and the land of Canaan
- Mesopotamia
- The three large rivers
- The position of Canaan as a crossroads between Egypt and Mesopotamia



The Fertile Crescent