Sumerian astronomers studied angle measure and used 360 degrees for dividing circles. They studied ratios of sides of similar triangles, discovering some basic properties, but did not form any systematic rules. They were the first to find the area of triangles.

In the 3rd century BCE, **Greeks** proved theorems equivalent to modern trig formula, using geometric methods.

In the 10th century BCE, **Islamic mathematicians** were using all six major trig functions and applying them to problems in spherical geometry.
Around the same time, **Chinese mathematicians** were developing trig independently, though it was not a major field.

Trig reached **Europe** through translations of Persian and Arabic astronomers. Trig was so little known in the 16th century BCE that **Copernicus** devoted two chapters to the basics in his seminal work on the heliocentric theory.

Trig grew into a major field due to demands of navigation and need for accurate maps. **Bartholomaeus Pritiscus** first used the word in 1545 and **Euler** first incorporated complex numbers in the 1700s.