

World History & Geography

Ancient Civilization

Grade 6A



Lesson Plans

"The Sumerians"

Subject:

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations 6A

Level:

Grade 6

Abstract:

Students will study the beginnings of civilization, starting with the Sumerians in the Mesopotamia area in the Near East. They will study the geography of the region, locate and describe the major river systems, and discuss the physical settings that supported permanent settlement. Students will then trace the development of agricultural techniques that permitted the production of economic surplus and the emergence of cities as centers of culture and power. They will study the culture of Sumerian people and learn and understand the relationship between religion, the social and political order, and the language and its written forms.

Invitation:

Today we read in the newspaper, hear on the radio, and see on the television the events taking place in the country of Iraq, located in the Middle East. Archeologists have studied the ancient civilizations and found some of the oldest civilized people lived in this region of the world. Let's learn about the ancient Sumerians, one of the first great civilized people and learn what they have contributed to later generations.

Situations:

Where: The lesson will take place primarily at school using computers in the classroom or computer lab. Optionally, some of the research may occur outside the school if students have access to a computer.

When: This Social Studies class lesson will be part of a larger unit on the early civilizations in the river valleys of Mesopotamia and Africa. The lesson will take place after the class has studied a unit on the earliest cultures and the beginning of agriculture.

How Long: This lesson will require up to two weeks to complete.

Tasks:

Task 1:

Students will listen to the invitation to this lesson.

Task 2:

The teacher will conduct mini-lessons and provide access to videos throughout the lesson that address the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Sumerians.

Task 3:

Students will examine a map of the present day Middle East and locate countries, bodies of water, rivers, and mountain ranges.

Task 4:

Students will complete an outline map, identifying the area of the ancient Fertile Crescent and location of the ancient Sumerian civilization. They will label major bodies of water, major rivers, and the location of ancient cities.

Task 5:

Students will read about the geography of the Fertile Crescent in their textbooks and/or other available material supplied by the teacher.

Task 6:

In small groups, students will discuss and record their thoughts regarding the basic needs for human survival. They will answer the question as to why people were able to settle and survive in the Fertile Crescent.

Task 7:

Students will read in their textbook or other appropriate reading material about the agricultural techniques that permitted the production of economic surplus and the emergence of cities as centers of culture and power; the religion; the social and political order; and the development of language and writing.

Task 8:

Students will take the role of museum director. In this role, students will be asked to present historical information about the Sumerians.

Task 9:

The teacher will explain what an artifact is and discusses with the students the significance of archeologists finding artifacts.

Task 10:

Using their study so far as a basis (textbook, mini-lessons, and videos), students will identify and contribute examples of artifacts that represent the Sumerian civilization. The teacher will write the list on the board.

Task 11:

Students will be divided into six groups. Each group will be assigned a topic to research and then make artifacts that represent their assigned topic. Topics are: Agricultural techniques and water management; religion; city planning and building; social structure and family life; language and writing; and art and inventions.

Task 12:

Students will use the Internet, school library, and other materials available to learn more about their assigned topic.

Task 13:

Students will maintain a log of facts and information sources with URLs used to identify Internet sources.

Task 14:

Students will draw or construct representations of at least two artifacts archeologists may have discovered or uncovered in their explorations.

Task 15:

Student groups will plan a museum exhibit using the information learned from their research and the artifacts made. The exhibit will be described using PowerPoint.

Task 16:

Each group will make a PowerPoint presentation to the class and will explain the information learned and why their artifacts are a good representation to be included in the museum exhibit.

Task 17:

Students will submit to the teacher their completed "Worksheet: Museum Exhibit Research Guide" attachment and log of facts and research sources.

Task 18:

The teacher will post student presentations on the class web page if available.

Interactions:

Full Class: Teacher will provide mini-lessons and videos throughout the lesson that address the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the Sumerians. The teacher will initiate full-class discussions after each mini-lesson. The teacher will encourage small-group brainstorm and discussions on assigned topics. Teacher will post student work on the class web page if available.

Small Groups: Small groups will discuss the life and contributions of the Sumerians and record their discussions. Small groups will cooperate in researching, gathering, and organizing information. Small groups will create artifact representations. Small groups will make PowerPoint presentations to the balance of the class.

Individual: Each student will participate in class discussions; listen to the teacher and other students; read assigned materials; complete an outline map; complete a log of facts learned through research pertaining to assigned group topic; participate in group presentation; and work cooperatively with assigned group.

Standards:

History-Social Science: Grade 6 Ancient World

6.2: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilization of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush:

1. Locate and describe the major river systems and discuss the physical settings that supported permanent settlement and early civilizations.
2. Trace the development of agricultural techniques that permitted the production of economic surplus and the emergence of cities as centers of culture and power.
3. Understand the relationship between religion and the social and political order in Mesopotamia and Egypt.
9. Trace the evolution of language and its written forms.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Identify the structural features of popular media (e.g., newspapers, magazines, online information) and use the features to obtain information.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level Appropriate Text

2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

Research and Technology

1.4 Use organizational features of electronic text (e.g. bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, e-mail addresses) to locate information.

Listening and Speaking

2.2 Deliver informative presentations:

b. Develop the topic with facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple authoritative sources

Assessment:

- "Map Completion Rubric:" To be completed by the teacher to determine the student's understanding of the geography of the region.
- "Oral Presentation Rubric:" To be completed by the teacher to assess student understanding of the topic, ability to organize, and ability to present information.

Tools:

- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Microsoft Word
- Internet Browser
- Clay, art, and drawing supplies for making artifacts
- Digital camera, digital video camera, or scanner for placing pictures and art work into PowerPoint

Project Tips and Alternatives:**Tip #1:**

Maps of the Mesopotamia region are available online. See:

<http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/map00-fc.html>,

<http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/map01mes.htm>

<http://www-oi.uchicago.edu/OI/PROJ/NIP/PUB93/NSC/NSCFIG1.html>

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~atlas/europe/interactive/map34.html>

Tip #2:

Depending on whether your students have had prior experience with Microsoft PowerPoint, you may want to walk through the attached step sheets.

Tip #3:

When editing and revising work using computer applications, remind students to save work often.

Tip #4:

Students can be assigned partners to accomplish research on assigned topic.

Tip #5:

Students can be taught how to use a search engine.

Attachments:

- "Map Completion Rubric"
- "Step Sheet: Creating a PowerPoint Presentation"
- "Step Sheet: Putting the Slide Show Together"
- "Step Sheet: Gathering and Inserting Electronic Images"
- "Step Sheet: Inserting Text and Clip Art or Graphics"
- "Worksheet: Museum Exhibit Research Guide"
- "Museum Exhibit: PowerPoint Sample"
- "Oral Presentation Rubric"

Web Resources – Content:

A list of [linked web resources](#) related to the content of this lesson can be found on the Lesson Page.

Web Resources – PowerPoint:

A list of linked web [resources for PowerPoint](#) can be found on the PowerPoint Resources page.

Assistive Technology:

Please refer to the [Assistive Technology section](#) for information on methods and devices to help ensure that all students have access to the curricula in the least restrictive environment.