

Mini Lesson Day 2: Ancient Mesopotamia

Overview: This is the first of a series of 8 mini-lessons to connect the idea of innovation and power to 6th grade social studies content standards. These materials are intended to tack onto the end of whatever day the teacher covers standard 6.12 as a summary activity for standards, 6.07, 6.09, 6.11 and 6.12. They may also be taught at the end of the year as course review materials.

Social Studies Content Standards:

6.07 Explain how irrigation, silt, metallurgy, production of tools, use of animals, slave labor, and inventions such as the wheel, sail, and plow led to advancements in agriculture.

6.09 Explain the basic concepts of monarchy and empire, and identify Mesopotamia as the regional location of the world's first empire.

6.11 Identify important achievements of the Mesopotamian civilization, including cuneiform, clay tablets, and ziggurats, and identify the Epic of Gilgamesh as the oldest written epic.

6.12 Analyze the impact of the introduction of written law in the Code of Hammurabi, and explain its basic principles of justice.

Social Studies Practices:

SSP.04 Construct and communicate arguments citing supporting evidence to: Demonstrate and defend an understanding of ideas, compare and contrast viewpoints, illustrate cause and effect, predict likely outcomes, devise new outcomes or solutions

SSP.05 Develop historical awareness by: Recognizing how and why historical accounts change over time, perceiving and presenting past events and issues as they might have been experienced by the people of the time, with historical empathy rather than present-mindedness, evaluating how unique circumstances of time and place create context and contribute to action and reaction, identifying patterns of continuity and change over time, making connections to the present

SSP.06 Develop a geographic awareness by: Using the geographic perspective to determine relationships, patterns, and diffusion across space at multiple scales (e.g., local, national, global), determining the use of diverse types of maps based on their origin, structure, context, and validity, analyzing locations, conditions, and connections of places and using maps to investigate spatial relationships, analyzing interaction between humans and the physical environment, examining how geographic regions and perceptions of regions are fluid across time and space

SEL Standards:

3A.2 Recognizes multiple points of view or perspectives in a situation

3C.2 Recognizes the similarities of different cultures and social groups

3C.3 Recognizes the value of different cultures and social groups

Objectives: I can identify innovations of Ancient Mesopotamia and how we still use them today by answering source-based questions.

I can determine who had power and influence in Ancient Mesopotamia.

Materials:

Innovations and the Voices that Shaped our World packet

Large laminated Key Characteristics of Civilizations Chart (provided by the Civic Design Center)

Mini pictures of innovations - laminated to tape or pin to maps

Launch: Transition to Innovation Connections

In order to transition from content focus to a local context, teacher can ask: Have you noticed any city innovations from Ancient Mesopotamia in our world, in Nashville, or in our neighborhood?

Procedure: Connecting Innovations

- 1) Pass out the *Innovations and the Voices that Shaped Our World* packet and have students turn to the Ancient Mesopotamia page.
- 2) Have students get out their instructional materials from the Ancient Mesopotamia unit to reference while they complete the assignment.
- 3) Have students complete the Ancient Mesopotamia portion of the packet where they will examine visuals showing examples of the legacy of Ancient Mesopotamia, identifying how the innovation changed Ancient Mesopotamia and the world and how we still use it today. They will also identify who the voices of power were that drove the innovations and led society.

Possible Teacher Discussion Prompts (Teacher prompts can be verbally presented in dialogue or selected and added to text boxes at the bottom of each page)

- Wheel
 - **Teacher Scaffolds and Guided Questions:** Let's quickly go around the room and state the number of ways we use the wheel. What would our world be like without the wheel? What types of strategies were Mesopotamians using before the invention of the wheel? Which characteristics of civilizations did the plow contribute to? How did the invention of the wheel allow ideas and goods to spread throughout the world?
- Sail
 - **Teacher Scaffolds and Guided Questions:** Why was the sail so innovative? What did people have to do before the invention of the sail? How would this new invention have helped with the improvement of transportation? How did it also contribute to the spread of ideas and goods around the world? What major events in history were possible because of the invention

of the sail? Which characteristics of civilizations did the sail contribute to? Where do you see the sail being used today?

- Plow
 - **Teacher Scaffolds and Guided Questions:** What does the plow do? How would a plow have helped the ancient Mesopotamians at the time? Which characteristics of civilizations did the plow contribute to? How is the plow still being used today? How does the plow impact our lives today?
- Cuneiform
 - **Teacher Scaffolds and Guided Questions:** Why was the creation of cuneiform important? What did it allow the Mesopotamians to do? Which characteristics of civilizations did the plow contribute to? Where do we see the influence of cuneiform today? What would the world look like if we did not have systems for writing? What kind of activities would we not be able to do?
- Irrigation:
 - What did the innovation of irrigation allow the Mesopotamians to do? How did it make their lives easier? Which characteristics of civilizations did irrigation contribute to? How do we see irrigation being used today? What does irrigation allow us to do today?

Closing/Reflection:

1. Students share out ideas from the final reflection page with partners or a group.
2. Class adds examples of Ancient Mesopotamia innovations to the Key Characteristics of Civilizations Chart.
 - a. Possible Script: *We have done an awesome job connecting the innovations of the Ancient Mesopotamia world and our world today. In our last activity we are going to identify how the Ancient Mesopotamian innovations influenced one of the Key Characteristics of Civilizations:*
 - i. *Culture*
 - ii. *Stable Food Supply*
 - iii. *Government*
 - iv. *Technology*
 - v. *Religion*
 - vi. *Writing*
 - vii. *Social Structure*
 - b. Possible Script: *Remember, an innovation can influence more than one of the key characteristics.*
 - c. Students place pins/tape pictures of innovations in identified areas:
 - i. Culture: Wheel, Sail, Cuneiform
 - ii. Stable Food Supply: Wheel, Plow, Irrigation
 - iii. Government: Cuneiform
 - iv. Technology: Wheel, Sail, Plow, Cuneiform, Irrigation

- v. Religion: Cuneiform
 - vi. Writing: Cuneiform
 - vii. Social Structure: Cuneiform
- d. Have students explain why they placed the innovations in the categories that they did.

Differentiation:

- Teacher should read reflection questions out loud for worksheets and brainstorm strategies
- Strategic Grouping/Partnerships
- Scaffolded Teacher Prompts