

Yale 2016 PIER Summer Institute: Ancient Cities, Modern Inquiries

Laws of Hammurabi (Babylon – ca 1750 BCE)

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School: Quinn Middle School (Hudson, MA Public Schools)

Subject Area(s): Ancient History

Grade Level(s): Grades 5/ 6

Time Allotment: 100 minutes (two lesson blocks)

Lesson Description: *Include- why is this important for students to know?*

Students will use a primary source (Laws of Hammurabi – ca 1750 BCE, Babylon) to understand the political, social, and religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Babylonians. This lesson will provide opportunities for students to practice interpreting and analyzing primary sources while at the same time extending their knowledge of “post-Sumerian” Mesopotamia.

During the first day of the lesson students complete graphic organizers while reading various sample laws from Hammurabi’s Code. On day two, students draft a paragraph that describes what they learned about the people that lived in Babylon at the time of Hammurabi.

Learning Context: *How does this lesson/unit fit within the context of the larger unit or other units?*

This lesson follows the unit on the transition from Paleolithic life to Neolithic life, the migration of people from the Zagros Mountains into Mesopotamia, and the advent of civilization in ancient Sumer. This lesson also provides a rare opportunity for students to work with text-based primary sources, while studying a period for which text-based primary sources are rare.

Skill: Primary Source analysis; **Content:** Social Life in ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Babylonia.

Compelling Question(s): *What question(s) will guide student inquiry during the lesson/unit?*

What can we learn about a culture by studying a primary source (i.e. their rules and laws)?
What do a society’s laws tell us about a culture’s values, social norms, attitudes regarding

gender/class, distribution of power, etc.?

Content Standards: *What standards are addressed through the teaching of this lesson/unit?*

RI6.1. Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI6.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

RI6.7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

Lesson Objectives/Learning Intentions:

Students will be able to analyze and interpret a text-based primary source document and make generalizations about a society's culture from studying the rules/laws of that culture.

Lesson Vocabulary:

Content Vocabulary	Skill/Process Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● stele● code● law● Babylon/Babylonians● River Ordeal● empire● artifact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Primary Source (The Code, photos of the stele)● Secondary Source (History Alive – The Ancient World textbook)● Divine Justice vs Human Justice● morality/ethics/values

Supporting Questions: *These questions are intended to contribute knowledge and insights to the inquiry behind the compelling question. These questions should provide students with the opportunity to explore content essential to advance the inquiry. Supporting questions should also serve to support development of formative assessment tasks (progress monitoring) and teacher or student selection of resources/teaching materials.*

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What can we learn about the Babylonians' attitudes towards Marriage/Divorce/Adultery from the code?	What can we learn about the Babylonians' religious beliefs from the code?	What can we learn about the Babylonians' attitudes about slavery and social class from the code?

Supporting Question 4	Supporting Question 5	Supporting Question 6
What can we learn about the Babylonians' attitudes about trade/business from the code?	What can we learn about the Babylonians' attitudes about government from the code?	What can we learn about the Babylonians' attitudes about punishment and rule enforcement from the code?
Formative Assessment		
<p>Students will be assessed informally during the introduction discussion (after students have read the background material from the <i>History Alive! The Ancient World</i> textbook), while discussing what they can learn about Hammurabi and his code by looking at pictures of the stele. The teacher will also be able to assess students during the group activity on day one. While students are discussing the laws of Hammurabi's Code, the teacher will listen in on some of the conversations. On day two the teacher can assess the students' ability to analyze primary sources.</p>		
Materials/Resources	Materials/Resources	Materials/Resources
History Alive! The Ancient World (Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2004) p. 54	The Laws of Hammurabi from M.T. Roth, Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor (Atlanta 1997) p. 71-141.	Teacher created resources (attached): "I Think, I See, I Wonder" graphic organizers PowerPoint Charts for first day of lesson


Summative Assessment/Performance Task:

The teacher will be able to assess the students understanding of the content of the lesson by reading the answers on the ["I See, I Think, I Wonder"](#) graphic organizers completed in class and as homework. S/He can also assess students' understanding while observing table-group discussion and contributions during the whole-class debrief/wrap-up. The paragraphs drafted by the students during the second block, using their completed graphic organizers, also provide opportunities for the teacher to assess student understanding.

Lesson Activities:

Students will look at a picture of the stele of Hammurabi's Code (ideally they'll notice signs of Hammurabi's grandeur, etc.) during the first block.

Students will look at several excerpts of Hammurabi's Code at stations. Each one will focus on a different aspect of life in Babylon around 1800 BCE. At each station will be laws from the code that are relevant to the topic of that station. Students will read these excerpts and



for each complete a “I See, I Think, I Wonder” graphic organizer.

1. Marriage/Divorce/Adultery
2. Trade/Business
3. Religion (River Ordeal)
4. Social Structure (slavery, class)
5. Government

After completing at least three graphic organizers and a fourth as homework, students will use their graphic organizers to draft a paragraph that describes what they learned about the people that lived in Babylon at the time of Hammurabi during block two of this lesson.