

Grades 4 - 6

Social Studies, History

Detectives of the Past: Dr. Archaeology Travels Back in Time

2002 NTTI Master Teacher
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Time Allotment: Two 45-minute sessions

Learning Objectives:

The students will be able to have a better understanding of the historical significance of the first known civilization, Mesopotamia, through exploration of the archaeological findings, which will be found through the viewing of a video and an Internet WebQuest. The students will be able to explain what the five criteria are that made historians believe that Mesopotamia was a civilization and how Mesopotamia meets the criteria. The students will be able to explain the major achievements, which the civilization brought to our world.

Standards:

State Standards:

Massachusetts History Standards:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hist>

#6201

#6202

#6203

#6204

#6206

#6208

#6209

Media Components:

Video: *Ancient Civilizations for Children:*

Ancient Mesopotamia

(Schlessinger Media, A Division of Library Video Company)

This movie provides an overview into the study of the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia. (To order call: 1-800-843-3620 or visit Web site at <http://www.libraryvideo.com>)

Web Site:

<http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/menu.html>

This site explores many facets of the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia

<http://www.puzzlemaker.com>

This site enables students to make their own "puzzles", which can be used as an assessment tool or an enrichment activity.

Materials:

Computers: bookmark Web sites

TV and VCR

pencils

Attachment # 1: "The Time Travelers Present an Overview of *A Long Time Ago*"

Attachment #2: "What Makes a Civilization"

Attachment #3: "Ancient Mesopotamia:

Important Vocabulary"

worksheet #1: "Focus Questions for Movie Questions"

Worksheet #2: "Mesopotamia- The WebQuest"

and "Web Activity Attachment"

world map for each student

Prep for Teachers:

Preview the video

Bookmark the Web site

Pre-teach the vocabulary prior to watching the tape

Optional: Dress-up as Dr. Archaeology (i.e. lab coat, wig, mustache etc.)

Introductory Activity: Setting the Stage

Introduce yourself as Dr. Archaeology, and tell the students that they will be traveling in the Time Machine, back to the year 5,000 B.C. Use a world map to show the location of the destination and discuss with the students that the civilization was located in an area now known as the countries of Syria, Iran and Iraq. Pass out attachment #1 & 2 and have the students read "The Time Travelers present an overview of *A Long Time Ago*" and "What Makes A Civilization" (attachment #2). Pass out the vocabulary (attachment #3) and discuss the meanings of these terms prior to viewing the video. The students will then be given the "Focus Questions for the Movie", to orally read as a pre-viewing strategy for the movie. The students will be told not to try to answer these questions while viewing the movie the first time. The students will be given a second viewing time where the movie will be paused and an opportunity to respond to the questions will be given. This way of presentation will enable the



students to get an overview of the civilization without being distracted.

Focus For Media Interaction:

The students will be given the “Focus Questions for the Movie” to preview prior to viewing the movie (worksheet #1). Instruct the students to read the question sheet and to listen and watch the video in its entirety for comprehension. The video will then be rewound and paused at the appropriate places. You can either have yourself or a student perform the tasks of the learning activities. Tell the students that while viewing the movie they will be answering the questions on worksheet # 1.

Learning Activity:

Start the video at the beginning of the program and **pause** after the narrator gives the introduction. Ask the students to define archaeology and Mesopotamia. **Resume** video and **pause** at the scene of the Mesopotamian archaeological dig. Ask the students " what provided archaeologists with clues?" Many answers may include the students interpretation of the Bible as they viewed the video. **Resume** the video and **pause** after the picture of the lyre. Ask the students who discovered the lost city of Ur. **Resume** and **pause** after the picture of Sir Leonard Wooley. **Ask** the students about the significance of the jewels. **Resume** the video and **pause** after the boy speaks. Ask the students about the Sumerians four major achievements and the name of the oldest game board. **Resume** and **pause** at the picture of the roll-out of the timeline. Ask the students to reflect on the Sumerians important contributions. Continue and **pause** at the picture of the Euphrates River. Ask the students "what is a ziggurat?" **Resume** and **pause** after, "it's a kid's life" with a boy and girl talking. Ask the students to describe the schools in ancient Mesopotamia. **Resume** tape and **pause** after the boy speaks. Ask the students " what were some of the reasons for the decline of Sumer?" **Resume** the tape and **pause** after the picture of the Assyrians with bows and arrows. Ask the students to describe the Assyrian's character traits. **Resume** play after the announcer sits in chair. Ask "why is Babylon

one of the Seven Wonders of the World?"

Resume the tape and **stop** at the end of tape and ask the students to recap the names of the three civilizations that inhabited Mesopotamia.

Focus for Media Interaction:

Web Activity:

Hand out the letter from Dr. Archaeology introducing the Mesopotamia (Web Activity Attachment) and to bookmark the site: <http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/menu.html>

Provide students with Worksheet #2 “Mesopotamia – The WebQuest”. Tell them that whenever they want to return HOME, they are to click on the map of Mesopotamia on the left side of the computer screen.

Culminating Activity/Cross Curriculum Extensions:

The students will be divided into six small groups and will be assigned a subject area: The Permanent Location, The Surplus of Food, The Division of Labor (daily life), The Organized Government and Religion, The Formal Writing System or the Major Achievements. The students will be asked to make an oral presentation about their area and to teach their classmates about the criteria, which make Mesopotamia a civilization. They may dress-up, act out, use visual props, posters with illustrations and writings, design crossword puzzles and music in their presentations. Creativity will be encouraged, and a bibliography of sources will also be requested.

Student Materials:

Attachment # 1: “The Time Travelers Present an Overview of *A Long Time Ago*”

Attachment #2: “What Makes a Civilization”

Attachment #3: “Ancient Mesopotamia: Important Vocabulary”

Worksheets #1: “Ancient Mesopotamia: The Land Between Two Rivers -Focus Questions for Movie”

Worksheet #2: Mesopotamia – The WebQuest” and “Web Activity Attachment” world map for each student



Attachment #1 - The Time Travelers present an overview of A Long Time Ago...

As Dr. Archaeology entered the Time Machine and voyaged on his first trip, he took a brief look at what historians believe to be the criterion, which makes a civilization.

The term history means "his-story." It refers to the period of time prior to when humans learned to read and write. Because of the clues that archaeologists have uncovered, we now know that the first writing came from the civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Thousands of years prior to the first civilizations, people lived as nomads, traveling from place to place, living in no permanent location. The men hunted animals and the women gathered plants for food. When the food surplus no longer existed in an area, people would move to a new location.

If the land and the climatic conditions allowed for a surplus of food to exist, the people began settling in a permanent location. Once they were settled, people began to specialize in their jobs and there became a division of labor. Eventually, people learned to write as a means of communication. They were able to pass on their knowledge to others. The formal writing system enabled the civilization to grow and develop because they learned from each other.

Attachment #2 - What Makes a Civilization?

There are many ways to define a civilization, but most scholars agree that when a society begins to form cities, it becomes a civilization. Most civilizations have the following elements:

- * The people **settle permanent location**.
- * There is a **surplus of food**.
- * There is a **division of labor**.
- * There is an **organized government and religion**.
- * There is a **formal writing system**.



Attachment # 3 - Ancient Mesopotamia Important Vocabulary

archaeology: the science that studies past cultures by analyzing their remains

Assyrians: The Assyrians were an accomplished, warlike people who dominated Mesopotamia after the Sumerians. The Assyrian civilization existed from 2000-605 B.C.

Babylonians: A people who ruled Mesopotamia after the Assyrians, they were known for their architecture and laws. The Babylonian civilization existed from 2000-539 B.C.

city-state: The ancient Sumerians organized themselves into competing city-states. A Sumerian city-state consisted of the city, the surrounding mud brick wall, and the surrounding farmland.

cradle of civilization: Mesopotamia is often referred to as the cradle of civilization because the world's first civilization occurred there. (the birth of civilization)

cuneiform: The ancient Sumerians created the world's first writing system known as cuneiform. The term cuneiform, means wedge-shaped. Sumerian writing is wedge-shaped because of the type of instrument that was used to create it.

edubba: An edubba is a Sumerian school where young boys learned reading, writing and arithmetic.

empire: An empire is a collection of kingdoms under the power of one powerful ruler.

fertile: Containing the nutrients needed for growth

Gilgamesh: Gilgamesh is one of the ancient Mesopotamia's most legendary historical figures. He was a heroic priest-king from the city state of Uruk.

Hammurabi of Babylon: About 1800 BC, the Amorites moved into Mesopotamia. They established their own city-states, and Hammurabi was the king of Babylon. He conquered the Akkadians and ruled all of the Mesopotamia. His region is often described as the Golden Age of Babylon because he established many new reforms and laws.

irrigation: The ancient Sumerians irrigated, or watered their crops by using a system of irrigation canals. By devising such an irrigation system, the ancient Sumerians were able to establish a permanent civilization.

levees: In order to stop the destruction from the seasonal flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the ancient Sumerians constructed levees, or raised sections of earth, in order to hold back the floodwaters.

lyre: A stringed instrument of the harp family

priest-king: In early ancient Sumerian history, the powerful priests were also the kings of the city-states.



scribe: A scribe is a person whose job was to copy written records by hand. (usually on clay tablets using a stylus)

stylus: A wedged-shaped pointed tool used to write on clay tablets.

Sumer: Sumer was the world's first civilization. It was located in the southern area of Mesopotamia where the two rivers converged. The people who lived in this area were called the Sumerians. The Sumerian civilization existed from 3500-2000 B.C.

Tigris and Euphrates Rivers: The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers begin in eastern Turkey, flow in a southeast direction, join together (converge) in southeast Iraq, and empty in the Persian Gulf. In ancient times, the land between the two rivers was the site of Mesopotamia.

ziggurat: The ziggurat was a tall temple with many levels. It was located in the center of each Sumerian city-state. It housed the city-states patron God. The term ziggurat means "mountain of God" or "hill of heaven." Since the ziggurat was a sacred place, only priests could enter it. It was believed that the higher one goes in the Ziggurat, the closer they come to God.



Worksheet #2- Web Activity Attachment
Mesopotamia - A Webquest
The Land Between The Rivers

Dear Students,

It is time to become *detectives of the past* and uncover information about the *cradle of civilization*, known as Mesopotamia. You will be entranced with the technology of the 21st century. You will use a machine called a computer and click to your destination. As you explore this civilization, remember in order to return *home*, please click on the outlined map title, Mesopotamia, which is located on the left side of your screen. Good-luck and I will see you when you return **HOME**.

Sincerely,

Archae
Dr. Archae Ology



Worksheet #1
Ancient Mesopotamia: The Land Between Two Rivers
Focus Questions for Movie

Directions: Read the questions carefully. While viewing the movie, answer the questions using part of the questions in the answer.

- 1) What does the archeology mean?

- 2) What does Mesopotamia mean?

- 3) What provided archeologists with the clues of the past?

- 4) Who discovered the lost city of Ur? When was it discovered?

- 5) How was the discovery of the different jewels in the tombs of the ancient Mesopotamians important information to the archeologists?

- 6) What are the four major achievements that the Sumerians brought to the world?

- 7) What was the oldest game board similar to in today's world?

- 8) What were some of the important contributions that the Sumerians to our world?

- 9) What was a ziggurat?

- 10) Describe the schools in ancient Mesopotamia?

- 11) What were some of the reasons for the decline of Sumer?

- 12) How would you describe the ancient Assyrians?

- 13) Why was Babylon, built by King Nebuchadnezzar, considered one of the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World?

- 14) What were the names of the three civilizations that inhabited ancient Mesopotamia?

