The Ancient World of Mesopotamia

WebQuest Description: This webquest was designed to engage students in 21st Century learning through the use of digital media and interactive conversation.

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Mesopotamia

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Introduction

The first great civilization, located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was developed in 5000 B.C. Archaeologists and historians discovered this "cradle of civilization" buried under sandy mounds of the vast plain which no longer exists today. It is now known as all the land in northern Syria, southern Turkey, and most of Iraq. Researchers believe the people of Mesopotamia influenced the development of the human race in many ways.

Tasks

You are an archaeological historian and are about to embark on a fantastic journey into the past to discover the mysteries of ancient Mesopotamia. Your goal is to achieve an understanding of what life was like, what the culture consisted of, how the government developed, details about the religious beliefs, the development of trade, the development of specialization and social classes, and how the first written language looked. You will discover that much of what we in the twenty-first century take for granted in our civilization has roots in the Mesopotamia of 5000 years ago. You will be asked to explore a number of web sites and find specific information that you will use to perform a number of tasks that you will adapt into a finished project to be turned in. It is possible for this web quest to be accomplished as an individual or as a group. You will be directed to a variety of web sites and will be asked to complete a variety of tasks. Each individual must complete each task and then as a team develop a project that creatively presents their knowledge of the area.

Task 1

Your first task is to write your monogram in cuneiform. If you are working in a group, this task must be completed individually. To do this you will go to the site Write Like A Babylonian at http://www.penn.museum/cgi/cuneiform.cgi

On this page, you will type your initials in the appropriate location. When asked if you want to remember these values for this site, choose Yes. Your monogram in cuneiform should appear. Your task is to copy the wedge-shaped writing onto a piece of paper. Be careful to accurately copy your cuneiform monogram as neatly and clearly as possible. You are going to use this monogram to create a cover page for your web quest project. You will design your monogram to fill the space provided. Quality, color, creativity, and accuracy are important. On the backside of the paper you must print your whole name. If working in a group your name should appear on the back of your section.

Task 2

Get a copy of a map of Mesopotamia from your teacher. Go to the following websites and follow the directions.

http://www.smithlifescience.com/MesopotamiaMap.htm

You may use the following websites to help you complete the map: http://www.fsmitha.com/h1/map01mes.htm, http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/geography/explore/exp_set.html or any other websites that may help you.

Task 3

Next go to the website About Cuneiform Writing... at http://www.penn.museum/games/cuneiform.shtml

You are going to label a map of Mesopotamia. Go to the following websites and follow the directions.

http://www.smithlifescience.com/MesopotamiaMap.htm

You may use the following websites to help you complete the map:

Task 4

Next go to the web site About Cuneiform Writing... at http://www.penn.museum/games/cuneiform.shtml
Answer the following questions. Write your answers in complete sentences on your worksheet. Include the worksheet in the packet of materials with the cuneiform cover.

1. Who created the first cuneiform over 5000 years ago?

2. What was cuneiform written on?

3. What were the two characteristics necessary to becoming a successful scribe?

4. Write a paragraph in which you speculate what the importance of written language is to civilization. How did it preserve knowledge, improve communication, and help improve government?

Task

Go to “It Happened First in Ancient Mesopotamia” http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/world/newsid_2955000/2955531.stm. In this article are a number of “firsts” that Mesopotamians achieved. Select two of these and design a visual that depicts each of the achievements and how each could have been used. Your visual should have labels, be colorful, and be accurate. Add this page to your packet of information with the cuneiform cover.

Your completed page should include:

- two visuals that depict each of the achievements
- how each object could have been used back then and how it is used today
- label each visual

Go to http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/gods/explore/exp_set.html. Read “Gods and Demons of Ancient Mesopotamia.” On a piece of paper list the following gods and goddesses names: Enki, Gula, Istar, Ninurta, and Anzu. Explain who they were and what their power was.

Task 6

To develop your understanding of Mesopotamia you will visit the following website to collect informational facts:

http://hypermedia.educ.psu.edu/k-12/edpgs/su96/meso/mesopotamia.html. When the website is downloaded follow the steps below.

1. Scroll down to STUDENT AREA 2.

2. Click on IMPORTANT VOCABULARY 3.

3. Write the definition of the following vocabulary words:

   a. Tigris and Euphrates
   b. Mesopotamia
   c. Sumer
   d. City-state

4. Click the back button.

5. In the STUDENT AREA click on Geography.

6. Read the passage and answer the following questions:

   a. What does “Mesopotamia” mean?
   b. Where was Mesopotamia located?
   c. What present day country would Mesopotamia be located in?

7. Click on the back button. Click on the STUDENT AREA and click on Geography. Read the passage and answer the following question:

   a. The _______ was the first major building structure of the Sumerians.
   b. Who was housed in the ziggurat?

8. Close webpage when completed.

Scroll down to “Teacher Area.” Click on “Study Guide.” Using your copy of the study guide complete the eighteen questions. A copy of the completed form must be added to your cuneiform packet.

Task 7

1. When everything is complete, you and two other classmates will then work together to create a written group report to be presented orally along with your other findings i.e. the map, artifacts, etc. to the Archaeological Museum of World History (the class).

2. Other classmates will then work together to create a written group report to be presented orally along with your other findings i.e. the map, artifacts, etc. to the Archaeological Museum of World History (the class).

3. If you would like, you may extend your presentation and earn extra points by incorporating the use of a presentation. You will be graded on the total sum of the project including all individual parts. See rubric.

Task 

&nb
EXPLORING MESOPOTAMIA

GROUP RUBRIC

Exemplary 4
Accomplished 3
Developing 2
Beginning 1
Score

Task Completion
All tasks were completed according to the timeline
Most tasks were completed according to the timeline
Some tasks were completed according to the timeline
Few tasks were completed according to the timeline

Time on task
Students used class time extremely effectively
Students used class time effectively
Students did not use class time effectively
Students used class time poorly

Cooperative
Students exhibited outstanding behavior in their dealings with teachers and peers
Students exhibited satisfactory behavior in their dealings with teachers and peers
Students exhibited poor behavior in their dealings with either the teachers or their peers
Students exhibited poor behavior in their dealings with teachers and peers

Group Report- Content
Contains information that is organized and uses details and examples from the research to clearly answer the questions
Contains information that is organized and clearly answer the questions in some detail.
Contains information that addresses the questions but may not be clearly written or organized
Contains little information that answers the questions

Group Report- Mechanics
Little or no grammatical or spelling mistakes; Written entirely in the authors’ own words.
Few grammatical or spelling mistakes; Written entirely in the authors’ own words.
Several grammatical or spelling mistakes; Written mostly in the authors’ own words.
Many grammatical or spelling mistakes; Copied the words from another author

Presentation
Presentation was visually effective and held the attention of the audience; Presenters put the map, chart and artifacts to good use
Presentation was complete and conveyed the necessary information; Presenters used the map, chart and artifacts
Presentation was somewhat effective; Presenters did not use either map and/or chart and/or artifacts
Presentation was disorganizes and ineffective
GRADE

\[
\frac{____}{24} = \frac{____}{50}
\]

EXPLORING MESOPOTAMIA INDIVIDUAL RUBRICS

Exemplary 4
Accomplished 3
Developing 2
Beginning 1

Score

Computer Use
Excellent
Very good
Fair
Poor

Time on task
Students used class time extremely effectively
Students used class time effectively
Students did not use class time effectively
Students used class time poorly

Map
Map is very complete having all elements.
Map is mostly complete having most elements.
Map is incomplete not having many of the elements.
Map is very incomplete

Artifacts/ Important Info about Mesopotamia

Artifacts are complete and very creative and student strives for historical accuracy.

Artifacts are complete and accurately reflect actual objects; Plaques are accurate and well written.

Artifacts are mostly complete one being entirely complete; Plaques are not accurate and/or well written.

Both artifacts are incomplete or show a complete disregard for accuracy; Plaques may be missing

Grade

EXPLORING MESOPOTAMIA GRADE

Group Grade = _____ /50
Individual Grade = _____ /50
Total Grade = _____ /100 x 2 = _____ /200

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<tr>
<td>Task Completion</td>
<td>All tasks were completed according to the timeline</td>
<td>Most tasks were completed according to the timeline</td>
<td>Some tasks were completed according to the timeline</td>
<td>Few tasks were completed according to the timeline</td>
<td>4 pts possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion B: Concepts</td>
<td>Application of concepts is inappropriate. The student may demonstrate some conceptual awareness and understanding by recognizing basic connections to the subject matter.</td>
<td>Application of concepts is not always appropriate. The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by describing basic connections to the subject matter.</td>
<td>Application of concepts is appropriate but superficial. The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by describing connections to the subject matter.</td>
<td>Application of concepts is appropriate and sophisticated. The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by explaining in detail connections to the subject matter.</td>
<td>10 pts possible</td>
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<td>Criterion C: Skills</td>
<td>The student can select and use some relevant information. The student attempts to carry out investigations, demonstrating few skills.</td>
<td>The student selects and uses mostly relevant information. The student demonstrates basic investigative skills.</td>
<td>The student selects and uses relevant information. The student demonstrates adequate investigative skills.</td>
<td>The student selects and uses a wide range of relevant information. The student demonstrates sophisticated investigative skills.</td>
<td>10 pts possible</td>
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You've learned a lot about ancient Mesopotamia and created a wonderful project. I hope you enjoyed learning about the beginnings of civilization and that you now have a better understanding of how man and why man created the first civilizations.

### Conclusion

You've learned a lot about ancient Mesopotamia and created a wonderful project. I hope you enjoyed learning about the beginnings of civilization and that you now have a better understanding of how man and why man created the first civilizations.

### Teacher Page

The webquest is designed to extend the students' study of ancient Mesopotamia. Students work together to create a project of their choice that demonstrates their knowledge of the subject. Students begin by selecting jobs and then reviewing our McDougall-Littell text. (Substitute your own textbook in place of ours.) Students then begin research on various aspects of Mesopotamia life and culture. Students use the International Baccalaureate (IB) Design Cycle to plan and create a project. This webquest was designed for a 6th grade class at an International Baccalaureate World School in California. This school participates in the Middle Years Program for 6th through 8th grades.

### Standards

- **Credits**
- **Other**

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<td>Criterion D: Organization and Presentation</td>
<td>Presentation and expression are unclear and imprecise.</td>
<td>Presentation and expression are occasionally unclear. Sources of information are documented, though there may be omissions or consistent errors in adhering to conventions.</td>
<td>Presentation and expression are clear; attention is paid to the audience and purpose in terms of appropriate language, style and visual representation.</td>
<td>Presentation and expression are clear, concise and effective, and the language, style and visual representation used are always appropriate to the audience and purpose.</td>
<td>8 pts possible</td>
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<td>Total Score</td>
<td>38 points</td>
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