Mesopotamia Unit

By: Vicki Silva and Maureen Savage

Sixth Grade
Del Rey Elementary
Brief Description of Unit

Ancient Mesopotamia, “cradle of civilization,” was the site of the earliest known civilization. The first system of writing, cuneiform, was developed in Mesopotamia. The Babylonian King Hammurabi was the first to write and distribute the laws of the empire. Throughout this unit, students will have the opportunity to learn about the geography of the Fertile Crescent.
Ancient Mesopotamia: “Cradle of Civilization”

I. **Unit Theme** – Change occurs
   - *Social structures*
   - *Geographical features and division*
   - *Philosophical and religious influences*
   - *Significant impact on future civilization*

II. **Focus/Motivation**
   - Inquiry charts
   - Living Wall
     - Map of world
     - Timeline of Mesopotamia
     - Big Book

III. **Closure**
   - Writing assignment – why life was good for its people
   - Create map of Fertile Crescent
   - Dioramas – depicting a scene of daily life
   - Court – play roles of judge, jury, clerk, lawyer, defendant etc.

IV. **Concepts – History/Social studies (California Standards) Grade 6**
   6.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Kush
   1. The geographical feature of Mesopotamia that made it become the “cradle of civilization.”
   2. The spread of three dominant civilizations: Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians.
   3. The technological and social accomplishments, including inventions of the wheel, plow and irrigation systems; their systems of cuneiform writing, and measurement, and of law.
   4. The significance of developing social, economic, and political systems that these accomplishments made possible through the Mesopotamian civilizations.

V. **Vocabulary**
   - Ziggurat
   - Mesopotamia
   - Silt
   - Polytheism
   - Irrigation
   - Drought
   - Plateau
   - Scribe
   - Cuneiform
   - City-states
   - Aqueduct
   - Moat
   - Code of Hammurabi
   - Empire
VI. Oral Language/Reading/Writing Skills – ELA Reading (ELA Standards) – Grade 6

1.0 Word analysis (ELA Standards)
   - Reads aloud from narrative and expository
   - Identifies and interprets, figurative and multiple meanings
   - Recognize and uses common foreign words used in English
   - Use of context and syntax for meaning (softly vs. quietly)
   “Shades of meanings”

2.0 Reading Comprehension (ELA Standards)
   2.1 Structural features of popular media
   2.2 Compare/contrast organizational patterns
   2.3 Connect and clarify main idea to sources
   2.4 Use of outline, notes, etc. to clarify meaning
   2.5 Follow multiple-step instructions
   2.6 Support own assertions with citations

3.0 Literary Response And Analysis (ELA Standards)
   3.3 Analyze influence of setting/character on plot
   3.6 Identify and analyze themes
   3.7 Common literary devices: imagery/metaphor, etc.

Writing (ELA Standard)

1.0 Strategies (ELA Standards)
   1.1 Matches writing form to purpose
   1.2 Multi-paragraph composition
   1.3 Use of variety of organizational patterns
   1.4 Uses electronic text for information
   1.5 Formats in word processing
   1.6 Revises and edits

2.0 Applications (ELA Standard)
   2.2 Writes expository
   2.3 Write research reports
   2.4 Writes responses to literature

Written And Oral Conventions (ELA Standards)
   1.1 Uses simple to compound, complex sentence structure
   1.2 Identifies and uses indefinite pronoun present perfect, past
       Perfect
   1.3 Correct punctuation
   1.4 Correct capitalization
   1.5 Spells frequently misspelled words (e.g., their, they’re)

Mathematics

   Number Sense
   1.2 Interpret and use ratios in different context
   2.1 Solve problems and explain why
Project GLAD
Del Rey Elementary School
Mesopotamia: Ancient Civilization Unit
Sample Daily lesson Plan

Day One:
Focus/Motivation
- Teach expectations of unit
- T-Graph (Responsibility, Respect, Safety)
- Tell class objectives on Mesopotamia
- Whole group

Input
- Inquiry charts:
  - What is the purpose of the Code of Hammurabi?
  - What do you know about the Sumerians?
  - Who are the Sumerians and Babylonians? Who came first?
  - How do we know what we know about then?
  - What changes occurred in the Fertile Crescent?
  - List the importance of a writing system.
- Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
- Discussion on inquiry charts
- Whole group

Reading/Writing
- Learning logs
- Individual

Closure
- Chant “Farmer’s BUGALOO!”
- Whole group

Day Two:
Focus/Motivation
- SQ observation
- T-Graph (review of rules; Respect, Responsibility, Safety)
- Write on board, discuss with class what might be true or false:
  1. The Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers were not important parts of the Fertile Crescent.
  2. Mesopotamia was threatened by long dry spells called droughts.
  3. The Fertile Crescent was not a good place for farming.
- Content dictionary: Mesopotamia
- Whole group
Input
  • Pictorial input chart (map of Fertile Crescent)
  • Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
  • Echo read (Sentences 1-3 above with answers)
  • T-Graph (Respect)
  • Whole group

Reading/Writing
  • Write/sketch the two rivers: Tigris and Euphrates
  • Learning log
  • Pairs/individual

Closure
  • Interact with journals
  • Show and Tell with neighbor
  • Chant
  • Pairs/whole group

Day Three
Focus/Motivation
  • Content dictionary: Fertile Crescent, plateau, silt, drought, irrigation
  • Highlight vocabulary words on Pictorial Chart on Fertile Crescent
  • Anthropologist awards
  • Picture File Card Sort
  • Bulletin board (focus on timeline)
  • Whole group

Input
  • Pictorial Input: Irrigation in Mesopotamia
  • Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
  • T-Graph: Responsibility
  • Picture File Cards
  • Read Around (main ideas)
  • Whole group

Reading/Writing
  • Read Mesopotamia magazine
  • Map work-Learning log (label Fertile Crescent)
  • Individual

Closure
  • Revisit Pictorial Input Chart (whole group)
**Day Four**

**Focus/Motivation**
- Read Aloud-riddle
- Anthropologist awards
- Content dictionary: Sumer, cuneiform, scribes
- Whole group

**Input**
- Cuneiform Pictorial Chart
- Whole/pairs

**Guided Oral Language**
- Review Pictorial Charts on Fertile Crescent
- Discuss importance of keeping records. What records did they keep? What records do we keep today?
- Whole group

**Reading/Writing**
- Read “Secrets of the Lost Alphabet”
- Learning log-record numbers 1-5, and 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60. Record birth dates in cuneiform.
- Whole/pairs

**Closure**
- Revisit Pictorial Chart on cuneiform
- Whole group

**Day Five**

**Focus/Motivation**
- Content dictionary: city-states, ziggurat, polytheism
- Anthropologist awards
- Picture File Card Sort
- Whole group

**Input**
- Pictorial Input chart: Sumer city-states
- Whole group

**Guided Oral Practice**
- T-Graph: Responsibility
- Personal Interaction: What was the meaning, the importance of the temple to the people?
- Whole/Pair
Reading/Writing
- Learning log
- Individual

Closure
- Make a pop-up model of a ziggurat
- Individual

Day Six
Focus/Motivation
- Important Book “Life in Sumer”
- Anthropologist awards
- Whole group

Input
- Read Aloud “Life in Sumer”
- Whole/pairs

Guided Oral Language
- T-Graph: Respect
- Sentence Frames (Cause and Effect)
- Whole/pairs

Reading/Writing
- Interactive Writing
- Read magazine “Daily Life”
- Create a table/thinking map (tree map)
- Individual

Closure
- Learning log
- Work on building child’s game, “Ur of Antiquity”
- Refer to bulletin board
- Individual

Day Seven
Focus/Motivation
- Think Aloud on Gilgamesh
- Anthropologist awards
- Whole groups
Input
- Circle map on Gilgamesh
- Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
- Brainstorm on Gilgamesh
- T-Graph
- Whole group

Reading/Writing
- Poem ‘The Epic of Gilgamesh”
- Learning log-What do you think made Gilgamesh a hero to ancient Sumerians?
- Whole/individual

Closure
- Review importance/benefits of cuneiform in Sumer society
- Work on Ur of Antiquity game
- Whole/individual

Day Eight
Focus/Motivation
- Content dictionary: empire
- Anthropologist awards
- Whole group

Input
- Read Aloud
- Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
- Discussion: compare/contrast locations and cultures of Ashur and Sumer. Ask why might it be more difficult to rule Babylonia then Sumer.
- Whole/pairs

Reading/Writing
- Map Work-Babylonia
- Learning log-Why might it be more difficult to rule at this time in Babylonia than in Sumer?
- Pair/individual

Closure
- Review Content dictionary
- Work on Ur of Antiquity
- Pairs/individual
Day Nine
Focus/Motivation
  • Discussion-importance of laws and the value of written laws
  • Anthropologist awards
  • Content dictionary: Code of Hammurabi
  • Whole group

Input
  • Pictorial Chart-Hammurabi (thinking map)
  • Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
  • T-Graph: Safety
  • Choral reading-excerpt “Code of Hammurabi”
  • Discussion on “Codes of Laws”
  • Whole group

Reading/Writing
  • Overhead on some of the laws of Code of Hammurabi; read to kids, groups discuss, predict, discuss viewpoints
  • Learning log-answer four questions from discussion groups
  • Whole/pairs/individual

Closure
  • Review meaning: Code of Hammurabi
  • Work on Ur of Antiquity game
  • Whole/individual

Day Ten
Focus/Motivation
  • Video on Mesopotamia
  • Anthropologist awards
  • Content dictionary: aqueduct
  • Whole/individual

Input
  • Narrative input/ A Time of War
  • Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
  • Role playing – kids pick roles during “Fall of Sumer”
  • T-Graph: Responsibility
  • Whole/Pairs
Reading/Writing
- Learning logs- write answers to questions from role playing roles
- Pairs/individual

Closure
Review cause/effect warfare
Work on Ur of Antiquity
Whole/individual

Day Eleven
Focus/Motivation
- Review time line
- Anthropologist awards
- Read Aloud
- Content dictionary: moat
- Whole group

Input
- Diagram – City of Babylon Rebuilt
- Narrative Input – Nebuchadnezzar, Hanging Gardens
- Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
- Picture Walk through city (refer to diagram)
- Discussion – What means did the Babylonians devise to protect their city?
  Differences from past
- Interview King Nebuchadnezzar
- T-Graph
- Whole group

Reading/Writing
- Learning log
- Write an imaginary letter home, describing what you’ve seen, heard, smelled, and felt as you walked through the city.
- Individual

Closure
- Review vocabulary words
- Work on Ur of Antiquity
- Individual
Day Twelve
Focus/Motivation
- Content dictionary: polytheism
- Thinking map – Religious Beliefs
- Anthropologist awards
- Whole/individual

Input
- Charts (bulletin board)
- Narrative Input Chart- Gods, Religious Beliefs
- Whole/individual

Guided Oral Practice
- T-Graph: Responsibility
- Discussion on evidence of beliefs
- Whole group

Reading/Writing
- Thinking map – list Gods and their supernatural powers
- Paris/individual

Closure
- Work on vocabulary
- Finish Ur of Antiquity
- Pairs/individual

Day Thirteen
Focus/Motivation
- Play a game “Ur of Antiquity”
- Anthropologist awards
- Pairs/individual

Input
- Pictorial Chart on Mesopotamia accomplishments
- Whole group

Guided Oral Practice
- Chart- Class helps fill out (comparing peoples, writing systems, government-law, inventions
- Pairs/individual

Reading/Writing
- Learning log – record chart
- Individual
Closure
- Review chart made in class
- Review vocabulary
- Individual

Day Fourteen
Focus/Motivation
- Review Inquiry Charts
- Review Picture File Cards
- Review Charts, time line (read the room)
- Whole/individual

Input and Guided Oral Practice
- Play Jeopardy
- Whole groups

Reading/Writing
- Handwritten test questions – kids quiz each other
- Assessment on Mesopotamia
- Group/individual

Closure
- Learning log
- Unit folders
- Individual
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<th>Inquiry Chart</th>
<th>Teacher-made Big Books</th>
<th>Picture File Cards/Observation Charts</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>Ziggurat</td>
<td>What is the purpose of Code of Hammurabi?</td>
<td>The Important Book of Mesopotamia</td>
<td>Daily Life Vocabulary words</td>
<td>Writing assignment</td>
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<td>Mesopotamia</td>
<td>What do you know about Sumerians?</td>
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<td>Anthropologist awards</td>
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<td>silt</td>
<td>What changes occurred in the Fertile Crescent?</td>
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<td>Create map of Fertile Crescent</td>
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<td>polytheism</td>
<td>Who are the Samarians and Babylonians?</td>
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<td>Court-role playing</td>
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<td>irrigation</td>
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<td>drought</td>
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### Input Strategies

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<tr>
<th>Pictorials</th>
<th>Compare</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Graphic Organizers</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation</td>
<td>Sumerians</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar</td>
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<td>Activities charts</td>
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<td>Timeline</td>
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<td>Accomplishments</td>
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<td>Gods/Religious Beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sumer city-state</td>
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<td>Read Aloud: “A Time of War,”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hammurabi</td>
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<td>“Life in Sumer”</td>
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### Guided Oral Practice Strategies

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<th>T-Graph for Social Skills</th>
<th>Chants</th>
<th>Sentence Patterning Charts (SPC)</th>
<th>SPC Extensions</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All statements are positive</td>
<td>Choral Reading</td>
<td>Vocabulary words</td>
<td>Pop-up Book</td>
<td>Picture Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbalize and internalize appropriate behavior</td>
<td>“Farmer’s BUGALOO!” Echo read</td>
<td>Cause/Effect - Sentence Frames</td>
<td>Post cards</td>
<td>Picture File</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect Responsibility Safety</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crossword puzzle</td>
<td>Cards</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **T-Graph for Social Skills**
  - All statements are positive
  - Verbalize and internalize appropriate behavior
  - Respect Responsibility Safety

- **Chants**
  - Choral Reading
  - “Farmer’s BUGALOO!” Echo read

- **Sentence Patterning Charts (SPC)**
  - Vocabulary words
  - Cause/Effect - Sentence Frames

- **SPC Extensions**
  - Pop-up Book
  - Post cards
  - Crossword puzzle

- **Other**
  - Picture Walk
  - Picture File
  - Cards
  - Comparison Chart
  - Thinking maps
  - Jeopardy
  - Anthropologist awards
  - First child’s game
  - Role playing
  - Interview a King
Resources and Materials

Literature

Secrets of the Lost Alphabet, Howard Günter

Gigues, Man’s First Story, Bernard Bryson

African Beginnings, James Haskins and Kathleen Benson

The Secret of the Royal Mounds, Cynthia Jameson

Gilgmesh the King, Kelcie A

Non-Fiction

Ancient World, McGraw Hill

“Mesopotamia” Kids Discover Magazine

Ancient World The Sumerians, Pamela Odijk

Social Studies Made Simple, Diane Sylvester (Frank Schaffer Pub)

History Pockets Ancient Civilizations, (Evan-Moor)

Videos

Ancient Civilizations Mesopotamia, Discover
Farmer’s BUGALOO!
By Vicki Silva and Maureen Savage

I’m an expert farmer and here to stay
I farm the moon shaped region ---everyday
Sometimes this land is rocky
Sometimes the land is bone-dry
Water comes from two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates

Rocky, Bone-dry, Fertile, and green
Doin’ the farmer’s BUGALOO!

River, silt and water made this a good place
Farmers had to overcome the yearly flood
Silt made of tiny rocks and soil came with floods
But when floods came the fields overflowed

It’s always feast or famine
Doin’ the farmer’s BUGALOO!

Mesopotamia became famous for its fertile fields
That’s why it’s the “LAND BETWEEN TWO RIVERS”
Farmers learned to irrigate
Farmers watered their fields and crops

Watering Land between two rivers
Doin’ the farmer’s BUGALOO!
Anthropologist Award

Scribes write on tablet.  They wrote with a stylus.

Anthropologist Award

Ziggurat was a temple.

Anthropologist Award

Plowing the fields.
The Terrible Battle
retold by Bernarda Bryson

The first superhero that we know about was King Gilgamesh. His adventures were described in an epic, a type of long poem that tells a story. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, more than four thousand years old, comes from ancient Mesopotamia.

In this episode, King Gilgamesh fights the wild man Enkidu. A woman named Harim has tried to tame Enkidu, but he remains very fierce. No one realizes that the gods have created him to teach Gilgamesh a lesson. The fighters however, surprise even the gods.
The gates of the city opened. Harim entered leading Enkidu by his hand. The people gathered around them: all the artisans and the workmen, old men and women and children. They exclaimed; they stood open-mouthed. Some jeered, but others gazed with admiration at the great stature of the wild man, his noble bearing, and his horns of a wild beast. Boys walked beside him trying to touch his hand or to keep pace with his steps.

As they approached the temple of Ishtar, Enkidu noted many people hurrying along the streets. "Stop one of them, O Harim, so that I can ask him why he hurries so!"

When they stopped a man, he said, "I am on my way to the temple, to the family house. Today, the people will all come together and try to choose a bride for Gilgamesh the King. For this is their right—it was decided even at the time of his birth. But let's hope that this time he will accept our choice, for he is a most willful king!"

Harim and Enkidu joined the hurrying crowd. The temple was the living-place of Harim, and when they arrived there she went inside, leaving Enkidu to wait for her at the gates. Harim would now put on the ear pendants and the bracelets and the necklaces which were proper for her to wear when she led Enkidu before the King.

Gilgamesh too came along that way. He walked through the streets, among the people, across the open spaces. He approached the temple of Ishtar in order to look upon the bride that the people hoped to choose for him.

He came to the gate through which Harim had gone. He
prepared to enter, but Enkidu stood in his path. Enkidu placed his foot across the opening. He barred the entranceway to Gilgamesh the King!

The people fell back, appalled. However tall and powerful this wild man might be, how did he dare to cross the path of the King? Was not Gilgamesh, after all, equally tall and equally powerful?

Gilgamesh tried to brush aside the insolent fellow, but Enkidu leaped upon him like a bull. They grappled with each other; they destroyed the threshold; they demolished the wall. It seemed that each was as powerful as the other, and each as angry. They fought, they wrestled; the round pillar of the gateway crumbled, scattering its colored tiles across the street. Bricks and mortar were loosened, and everywhere was the dust of battle.

Enkidu sought to bend the back of the King as he had twice wrenched that of the lion, but the King was more powerful and did not yield. He, on the other hand, caught hold of the soaring horns of Enkidu and held him fast, slowly twisting his neck. But Enkidu broke away and again they lunged at each other. Which one would destroy the other? The populace surged around them and would have interfered to save their king, but the elders of the town cautioned them: “Stand back; the King will subdue the wild man; your help would only shame him!”

Now the King seemed to prevail, and now the wild man. They sweat, they bled, and neither seemed to weaken. Harim came to the temple gate and drew back again, her heart failing her.

Gilgamesh, the lofty and unconquerable, weakened and fell to his knees. Again the crowd surged forward to help him, but the elders cried out: “Stop! Whatever happens is the will of the gods!”

But even as Gilgamesh sank to his knees, his spear rested upon his back, and his stone axe remained at his side untouched.

He knelt helpless, his breast exposed to the fury of the wild man, when strangely enough, Enkidu lifted him to his feet. They clasped hands, they embraced.

“I salute you, Gilgamesh, lion and great fighter!”

“Welcome to my city, O godlike Enkidu!”

 insolent: extremely rude
threshold: the bottom part of a door frame
demolished: tore down
mortar: mixture of sand, water, and lime that hardens as it dries; used to hold bricks together
wrenched: twisted
soaring: upward turning
prevail: be victorious