World History & Geography I Inquiry (180-200 Minutes)

How did Nature Impact the Development of Ancient Societies?
Comparing Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia

Supporting Questions- These are used to structure and develop the inquiry

1. How can the physical geography of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia be described?
2. How were the governments of Egypt and Mesopotamia impacted by their location?
3. How did the Mesopotamian and Egyptian views on religion and the afterlife compare and contrast?

Designed by Melinda Conner & Craig Perrier
Overview – How did nature impact the development of ancient civilizations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did nature impact the development of ancient civilizations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VA SOL Content Standard</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHI.3 The student will apply social science skills to understand the ancient river valley civilizations, including those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus River Valley, and China and the civilizations of the Hebrews and Phoenicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VA SOL Skills Standard 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a – Using Information Sources, 1c – Interpreting Information, 1e – Comparing &amp; Contrasting, 1f – Determine Cause/Effect, 1g – Making Connections 1j – Using Content Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Portrait of a Graduate Correlations**

**Introducing the Question**

HOOK: Students will be asked to describe how physical geography impacts the Washington, D.C area. Afterward, students will read an excerpt from The Hymn to the Nile and create a claim to answer the compelling question.

- **Supporting Questions - These are Used to Structure and Develop the Inquiry**

**Supporting Question 1**

How can the physical geography of Mesopotamia and Egypt be described?

**Formative Performance Task**

T-chart: Students will complete a T-chart as they complete the readings and then the teacher will conduct a

**Featured Sources**

A. Mesopotamian Geography: Life in the Land between Rivers
B. Newsela article on the Nile’s influence
C. Additional: Britannica article on Egyptian Geography (linked below)

**Supporting Question 2**

How were the governments of Egypt and Mesopotamia impacted by their location?

**Formative Performance Task**

Mini-lesson, Stations, and Debrief – Students will move in stations to examine the government structures of Mesopotamia and Egypt

**Featured Sources**

A. Egyptian Hall of Fame Reading
B. Khan Academy Ancient Egypt video
C. Ancient Mesopotamians by Richard Hooker
D. Khan Academy Mesopotamia

**Supporting Question 3**

How did the Mesopotamian and Egyptian views on religion and the afterlife compare and contrast?

**Formative Performance Task**

Wraparound Discussion – Students will participate in a full class discussion regarding religions in both Mesopotamia and Egypt.

**Featured Sources**

A. Enkidu’s Dream from the Epic of Gilgamesh
B. The Papyrus of Ani
C. Synopsis of the Egyptian Gods
D. Mesopotamian Religion by Joshua Mark
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Performance Tasks</th>
<th><strong>ARGUMENT:</strong> How did geography impact the forms of government and religions in Mesopotamia and Egypt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTENSION:</strong> Students can read Jared Diamond’s article regarding agriculture and the negative impact on the world and daily life for humans.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking Informed Action</th>
<th>Students will write a blog post regarding their views about whether or not geography continues to play a significant role in shaping cultures, beliefs, and institutions around the world.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPLORE THIS BLOG POST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING INFORMED ACTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking Informed Action: UN Sustainable Development Goals</th>
<th>Students will make and display a mini-poster regarding actions they will take to make to improve sustainability and protect the environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Student Generated Questions (this is done throughout the inquiry)**

It is important to have students involved in the inquiry process; because of this, ask students to share questions and curiosities they have regarding the compelling question. These questions can be recorded during the inquiry process. Below are some suggested prompts to ask students.

- What questions came up during class?
- What are you wondering about?
- What information do you (still) need to answer the compelling question?
- How can you further your understanding of this topic?
- Where can you access additional sources or information on this topic?
- Who could be an additional resource for your inquiry?

Record student questions in a “parking lot” (on a poster, white board, google doc) so that the class can readily access them. Throughout the inquiry, return to these questions and, if possible, weave them into your instruction and formative assessment. By intentionally soliciting and then addressing/using students’ questions, you develop their ability to ask questions, plan for future steps, and think about their thinking (metacognition).

**NOTE:** It is possible to use these students’ questions as the supporting questions for the inquiry. If you do, you may need to make adjustments to your teaching and the resources identified for this inquiry.
Optional Background Resources


Any and all of these videos may be good hooks to introduce the topics in this Inquiry to students.

A. Mesopotamia Song video by They Might be Giants: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAMRTGv8ZrQ]
B. Humorous videos by Mr. Nicky: Mesopotamia: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdbRch6m3g]
C. Humorous videos by Mr. Nicky: Ancient Egypt: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=960mk5JRSBk]

General Types of Supports

**Graphic Organizers** – Over a dozen free styles you can customize and download.

**53 Ways to Check for Understanding**
A collection of formative assessments.

**Document Analysis Tools from the National Archives** and **Library of Congress**

**Sensory Support**
- Real life objects
- Manipulatives
- Pictures & Photographs
- Illustrations, diagrams, and drawings

**Graphic Supports**
- Charts
- Graphic organizers
- Tables
- Graphs
- Slotted outlines

**Interactive Support**
- Explicit modeling
- Think alouds
- Pairs/partners
- Triads or small groups
- Cooperative learning
- Shared reading

**Linguistic Supports**
- Sentence frames
- Word walls
- Pre-teach vocabulary within context of text or learning task
- Read aloud
- Leveled texts
- Use of home language

**Behavior Supports**
- Clear behavior expectations
- Explicit routines and procedures
- Student self-regulation strategies
- Coping and stress relief strategies
INSTRUCTIONS/PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING THE COMPELLING QUESTION:

The hook is meant to get students thinking about the compelling question (How did nature impact the development of ancient civilizations?) and is intended to help generate discussion. Prior to the passing out the reading, asking students to relate the topic to their environment will help peak their interest. The excerpt provides information from a primary source from ancient Egypt and demonstrates that the Egyptians were greatly influenced by the Nile and grateful for its presence. The excerpt may begin dialogue about ancient religions and the influence of the environment as well.

Steps for the hook:

1. Ask students how people in the Washington, D.C. area are impacted by their environment (or the physical geography) around them. Encourage students to share with the class.
2. Next, ask students to read and annotate the excerpt from the “Hymn to the Nile” and explain that it is a primary source from Egypt.
3. After considering the excerpt, ask students to write a claim sentence (or informed opinion) in response to the compelling question (How did nature impact the development of ancient civilizations?).
4. When students have finished writing their claims, lead a whole group discussion and have several students share their claim sentences.
5. To further generate dialogue, ask students why they think the author referred to the Nile as “he.” Examine specific lines from the poem such as “If he is sluggish, the nostrils are stopped up, and everybody is poor” and “every tooth exposed.”
6. Wrap up by asking if the author believes he could live without the Nile.
Featured Source

_Hymn to the Nile (excerpt)_

http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/hymn-nile.asp

Hail to you, O Nile, that issues from the earth and comes to keep Egypt alive!.....

He that waters the meadows which Re created, in order to keep every kid alive.

He that makes to drink the desert and the place distant from water: that is his dew coming down from heaven........

The lord of fishes, he who makes the marsh-birds to go upstream......

He who makes barley and brings emmer [wheat] into being, that he may make the temples festive.

If he is sluggish, the nostrils are stopped up, and everybody is poor........

When he rises, then the land is in jubilation, the every belly is in joy, every backbone takes on laughter, and every tooth is exposed.

The bringer of food, rich in provisions, creator of all good, lord of majesty, sweet of fragrance........

He who makes every beloved tree to grow, without lack of them.
Student Generated Questions (this is done throughout the inquiry)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Performance Task</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will read two readings regarding geography, fill in a T-Chart comparing both Egypt and Mesopotamia, and then have a Save the Last Word for Me discussion in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Featured Source(s)</strong></td>
</tr>
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Process and Formative Performance Task

This is a three part activity:

1. Students will read two short texts about the geography of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt.
2. As they read they have two tasks: underline two sentences in each reading that stood out to them and fill in a T-chart with facts about the geography in each region. The T-chart structure will help them compare the geography of both regions and will aid future discussions.
3. To wrap up, students should return to the sentences they have underlined in the readings and follow the below directions for the “Save the Last Word for Me” small group activity (directions below).

Save the Last Word for Me Directions: https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies

The Save the Last Word for Me discussion strategy requires all students to participate as both active speakers and active listeners. Working in groups of three, students follow a pattern of sharing and discussing their responses to a text. By creating a clear structure for the discussion, this strategy encourages reserved students to share their ideas and ensures that frequent speakers practice being quiet. It can be a useful strategy for helping students debrief a reading or film.

Procedure

1. **Students Read and Respond to Text**
   Have students read the selected texts. Ask students to highlight or underline two sentences that particularly stood out for them. In the margins near the highlighted/underlined sentences, students should write a few sentences explaining why they chose that line from the reading—what it meant to them, reminded them of, etc. They may have connected it to something that happened to them in their own life, to a film or book they saw or read, or to something that happened in history or is happening in current events.

2. **Students Share in Groups**
   Divide the students into groups of three, labeling one student A, one B, and the other C in each group. Invite the A students to read one of their chosen quotations to their group. Then students B and C discuss the quotation. What do they think it means? Why do they think these words might be important? To whom? After several minutes, ask the A students to explain why they picked the quotation, thus having “the last word.” This process continues with the B students sharing and then the C students.
Featured Sources

FEATURED SOURCE A:

Mesopotamian Geography:
Life in the Land between Rivers
By Melinda Conner

Around 8,000 B.C., humans began to settle into small communities and started to farm, exchanging the nomadic lifestyle of the hunters and gatherers for permanent settlements. Small clusters of villages developed around water sources because the water was needed to grow crops and tend to animals. As more people settled in these villages and communities, and populations grew because of the abundance of food, the world’s first cities were built. The earliest of these new cities were in a region called Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia means the “land between the rivers” and it is often referred to as both the “Cradle of Civilization” and the “Fertile Crescent.”

In order to fully understand Mesopotamia and its people, it is important to understand the physical environment in which the people lived. Sometimes conditions in Mesopotamia were harsh due to lack of water and punishing dryness and temperatures. On the other hand, some regions had lush and abundant landscapes, with plentiful soil for growing crops. Fighting to control the “good” land became a way of life. The environment ultimately influenced everything from their architecture, to their systems of government, and their trade relationships. It spurred them on to be great tool and weapon makers and shaped their culture, art, religion, and views about the afterlife.
Mesopotamia is made up of two regions: northern Mesopotamia and southern Mesopotamia. In the northern part of Mesopotamia, there are rivers and streams that get their water from the mountains as snow and ice melts. However, the hills and mountains in the north sometimes helped to hide invaders who were moving in to fight for the land near the rivers. They also had a rainy season that helped to water the soil for crops. The southern region was significantly drier and hotter. While they were challenged by drier conditions, they used the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers as the source of irrigation to support farm lands. Irrigation is the process of bringing water from rivers or lakes to fields by constructing canals, pumps and dams. The soil in the south around the rivers was marshy and fertile, but the south also had wide, flat, open plains with few natural barriers to provide protection from invaders. The plains were not suitable for farming, but could support herding of animals like goats.

The flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates was both a blessing and a curse. Each year rain and melting snow in nearby mountains caused the two rivers to flood their banks. The timing of the floods was unpredictable, and in bad years could lead to destruction of both crops and human life. If it was an especially large flood, whole villages could be destroyed. If it came at the wrong time, the floods could wipe out growing crops that were needed to feed the population. The blessing of the floods was that they left a fine, rich mud called silt after the waters receded. The silt provided nutrients and moisture for crops to grow. As Mesopotamians became more skilled at irrigation techniques, they could move water to farm lands farther away from the river banks, providing a degree of protection from flooding. In addition to irrigation, early settlers began to use wooden plows to soften the land for planting crops. They grew a wide variety of crops including wheat, barley, onions, and dates.

The people of Mesopotamia were not one ethnic and cultural group, instead there were many different groups of people that lived near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers over thousands of years. Power shifted between these groups and controlling the land around the rivers was always the goal. The fertile soil provided a rich food source and wealth for the people in power. Many wars were waged over control of water access. The Mesopotamian people organized the world’s first city-states, and over time larger kingdoms and the first empires emerged. Their contributions are still profoundly influential today. The Sumerians invented the wheel and the first writing system, the Babylonians created the first law code, and the Assyrians built the first library, but these only represent a few reasons the Mesopotamians are remembered today.
How the Nile River Led to Civilization in Ancient Egypt

Hieroglyphics, pyramids, mummies, the Sphinx of Giza, King Tut and Cleopatra — the sands of the Nile River Valley hold many clues about one of the most mysterious, progressive and artistic ancient civilizations. A great deal of evidence survives about how the ancient Egyptians lived, but questions remain. Even the wise sphinx would have trouble answering some of them. How were the pyramids built? Who came up with the idea for mummies and why? What was a typical day like for a pharaoh? Something we can know is that ancient Egypt had the five major components of civilization: cities, specialized workers, complex governing institutions, record keeping and advanced technology.

In de-Nile

None of the achievements of the remarkable ancient Egyptian civilization would have been possible without the Nile River. There is always a connection between landscape and how a people develop. It does not take the wisdom of a sphinx to understand why.

Archaeologists and historians don’t know exactly how Egyptian civilization evolved. It is believed that humans started living along the Nile’s banks starting in about 6000 B.C. Uncovered remains reveal that Neolithic (late Stone Age) people thrived in the Nile Valley that far back. But it wasn’t until 3800 B.C. that the valley’s inhabitants began to form a cohesive civilization. In 3000 B.C., Egypt looked similar geographically to the way it looks today. The country was mostly covered by desert. But along the Nile River was a fertile swath that proved — and still proves — a life source for many Egyptians.

The Nile is the longest river in the world; it flows northward for nearly 4,200 miles. In ancient times, crops could be grown only along a narrow, 12-mile stretch of land that borders the river. Early Egyptians grew crops such as beans, wheat and cotton. Despite the lack of many natural resources, such as forests or an abundance of land for farming, a great society emerged.
Food for thought

For the earliest inhabitants of the Nile Valley, food was not easy to find. There were no McTut's selling burgers, and, though there were a lot of crocodiles, those critters were pretty hard to catch. Over time, however, despite being in the midst of desert surroundings, people discovered that the Nile River provided many sources of food. Along the river were fruit trees, and fish swam in the Nile in great numbers.

Perhaps most importantly, they discovered that, at the same time each year, the Nile flooded for about six months. As the river receded, it deposited a rich, brown layer of silt that was suitable for growing wheat, beans, barley or even cotton. Farmers learned to dig short canals leading to fields near the Nile, thus providing fresh water for year-round irrigation. Planting immediately after a flood yielded harvests before the next year's flood.

The road to civilization required more organization and increased efficiency. Farmers began producing surplus crops that allowed others to move their concentration from farming to pursuing other trades, such as mercantilism or skilled craftwork. This development of specialized workers is a hallmark of civilization. Egyptian artisans created copper tools such as chisels and needles — all new inventions — that allowed them to fabricate ornamental jewelry. Artisans discovered how to make bronze by mixing copper and tin, which marked the beginning of the Bronze Age. Evidence also suggests that ancient Egyptians invented the potter's wheel. This tool made it easier to create pots and jars for storage, cooking, religious needs and decoration.

Prime time

One of the ancient Egyptians' inventions, the calendar, has helped define time itself. In order to know when to plant, the Egyptians needed to track days. They developed a calendar based on the flooding of the Nile that proved remarkably accurate. It contained a year of 365 days divided into 12 months of 30 days each. The five extra days fell at the end of the year.

Here's a problem that the sphinx might have trouble answering: How did the ancient Egyptians make their calendars? What material did they use? Remember, there was no paper. Need a clue? Take a dip in the Nile. Large reeds called papyrus grew wild along the Nile. The Egyptians developed a process that turned these reeds into flattened material that could be written on (also called papyrus). In fact, the English word "paper" has its root in the ancient Greek word "papyrus." Among the first things written on papyrus were calendars that tracked time.

Papyrus had many other uses. Boats were constructed by binding the reeds together in bundles. Baskets, mats, rope and sandals were also fashioned from this multipurpose material.
Writing set the Egyptians apart from some of their neighbors. Egyptians used hieroglyphics, or pictures, to represent words or sounds. This early form of writing was discovered by the Western world after Napoleon's army invaded Egypt in 1798. The Rosetta Stone, a black tablet containing inscriptions, was deciphered and became crucial in unlocking the mystery of hieroglyphics and understanding Egyptian history.

**Sand, land and civilization**

Even today, the world around the Nile is quite barren. Outside of the narrow swath of greenery next to the river, there is sand as far as the eye can see. To the Nile's west exists the giant Sahara, the largest desert in the world.

From north to south, the Sahara is between 800 and 1,200 miles wide; it stretches more than 3,000 miles from east to west. The total area of the Sahara is more than 3.5 million square miles. It's the world's biggest sandbox.

And, as if there weren't enough sand in the Sahara, east of the Nile are other deserts. Although sand had limited uses, these deserts presented one tremendous strategic advantage: few invaders could ever cross the sands to attack Egypt — the deserts proved too great a natural barrier. After learning to take advantage of the Nile's floods — and not having to fear foreign attacks — the Egyptians concentrated on improving farming techniques. As the years passed, Egyptians discovered that wheat could be baked into bread, that barley could be turned into soup (or even beer), and that cotton could be spun into clothing.

With many of life's necessities provided, the Egyptians started thinking about other things, such as art, government, religion and philosophy — some of the basics needed to create a civilization. The pharaohs emerged, ruling Egypt for about 3,000 years. They were by and large capable administrators, strong military leaders, sophisticated traders and overseers of great building projects. Eventually, pyramids, mummies and great cities became touchstones of this flourishing culture.

Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted for several thousand years. Many of its discoveries and practices have survived an even greater test of time.

**FEATURED SOURCE C:**

If you’d like further information about Egypt, consider this short article from Encyclopedia Brittanica: [https://www.britannica.com/place/ancient-Egypt](https://www.britannica.com/place/ancient-Egypt)
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**Additional Support/Scaffolds/Extensions**

Teachers can substitute these readings with others of their choice. They can also opt to use videos instead of readings.

The T-chart can be completed as a whole group instead of individually.
## Supporting Question 2 (80-90 Minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Question</th>
<th>How were the governments of Egypt and Mesopotamia impacted by their location?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formative Performance Task</td>
<td>Students will rotate through stations to learn about the governments of Mesopotamia and Egypt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured Source(s)</td>
<td>A. Egyptian Hall of Fame reading (below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Khan Academy Ancient Egypt Video (14:16)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGSLyp8mmMc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGSLyp8mmMc</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Ancient Mesopotamian Civilizations by Richard Hooker (below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Khan Academy Mesopotamia Video (9:23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GQdh2eGP-Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GQdh2eGP-Y</a></td>
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## Process and Formative Performance Task

Students will rotate through stations to learn about the governments of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.

Prior to the stations, provide a 10-15 minute mini-lesson on the Egyptian and Mesopotamian government systems. Discuss how Mesopotamia had distinct city-states, kingdoms, and then empires. There was a progression of government systems becoming increasingly centralized. Discuss the frequent shifts in power over the years and ask them if they can think of any geographic reasons for frequent shifts in power and wars. In addition, discuss that Egypt had three long lasting Kingdoms (Old, Middle, and New) and that there was little interference from people outside Egypt. Note that Egypt had a strong, lasting central government and did not have the same incremental progression seen in Mesopotamia.

1. As students rotate, ask them to take quick notes on the readings and the videos. You can provide a graphic organizer for this if you prefer.
2. Students should identify the most important contributions of each Mesopotamian civilization and each Egyptian pharaoh.
3. When the class comes back together, ask students to share some of the identified contributions and if they see correlations between the contributions and the environments in which they lived.
Featured Sources:

FEATURED SOURCE A:

**Egyptian Hall of Fame**


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**Narmer/Menes**

Also known as Aha and Scorpion, Menes was the first pharaoh of the 1st Dynasty in Egypt. He ruled from 3100-2850 B.C during the Protodynastic era of Egypt's history. This time period was characterized by “firm political structure of the land which was unified by the pharaoh” (Ancient Egypt-Narmers Palette). Menes was credited with unifying Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom. He may have accomplished this with military force and/or by peaceful means such as marriages or administrative measures. Besides unifying Egypt, Menes also founded the city of Crocodopolis where he built the first temple to Ptah (Menes), and also the city of Memphis, which he made his capital. The city of Memphis was situated 28 km south of modern day Cairo on an island on the Nile River. This location was most likely chosen because it would make it easier to protect the city from invading armies, and also because it would allow the pharaoh to control the river delta and trade routes to Sinai and Canaan. The Greek Herodotus wrote about the construction of Memphis by Menes.

During his reign Menes expanded the kingdom and its influence to the first cataract on the Nile, sent ambassadors to Canaan and Byblos in Phoenicia where he developed commercial trade links, and also attacked the Nubians to the south (Menes (Aha) 1st Dynasty). Menes had two wives, Queen Berenib and Neithotepe. Neithotepe was the mother of Menes' only son and heir, Djer. After Menes died, Neithotepe became regent until Djer came of age to rule Egypt. Menes died when he was sixty-three years old by either being attacked by “wild dogs and Nile crocodiles in Faiyum” (Menes) or by hippopotamus. His tomb is at Saqqara, which was a necropolis of Memphis.

**Imhotep**

Of the non-royal population of Egypt, probably one man is known better then all others. So successful was Imhotep that he is one of the world's most famous ancients, and his name, if not his true identity, has been made even more famous by various mummy movies. Today, the world is probably much more familiar with his name then that of his principal king, Djoser. Imhotep, whose name means “the one that comes in peace,” existed as a mythological figure in the minds of most scholars until the end of the nineteenth century when he was established as a real historical person.
He was the world's first named architect who built Egypt's first pyramid, is often recognized as the world's first
doctor, a priest, scribe, sage, poet, astrologer, and a vizier and chief minister, though this role is unclear, to
Djoser (reigned 2630–2611 BC), the second king of Egypt's third dynasty. He may have lived under as many as
four kings. An inscription on one of that kings statues gives us Imhotep's titles as the "chancellor of the king of
lower Egypt", the "first one under the king", the "administrator of the great mansion", the "hereditary Noble",
the "high priest of Heliopolis", the "chief sculptor", and finally the "chief carpenter".

Of the details of his life, very little has survived though numerous statues and statuettes of him have been
found. Some show him as an ordinary man who is dressed in plain attire. Others show him as a sage who is
seated on a chair with a roll of papyrus on his knees or under his arm. Later, his statuettes show him with a god
like beard, standing, and carrying the ankh and a scepter.

**Hatshepsut**

Hatshepsut, the fifth ruler of the 18th Dynasty, was the daughter of Thutmose I and
Queen Ahmose. As was common in royal families, she married her half-brother,
Thutmose II, who had a son, Thutmose III, by a minor wife. When Thutmose II died in
1479 B.C. his son, Thutmose III, was appointed heir. However, Hatshepsut was
appointed regent due to the boy's young age. They ruled jointly until 1473 when she
declared herself pharaoh. Dressed in men's attire, Hatshepsut administered affairs of
the nation, with the full support of the high priest of Amon, Hapuseneb and other
officials. When she built her magnificent temple at Deir el Bahari in Thebes she made
reliefs of her divine birth as the daughter of Amon. Hatshepsut disappeared in 1458
B.C. when Thutmose III, wishing to reclaim the throne, led a revolt. Thutmose had her shrines, statues and
reliefs mutilated.

**Akhenaten**

Not a Pharaoh to do things by half, when Akhenaten established his new religion he built an entire city
dedicated to the Aten complete with a necropolis and royal tomb. This city was Akhetaten, the Horizon of
the Aten and at the peak of Akhenaten's reign over 20,000 people lived there. The city was built in middle
Egypt, on a site thought to have been chosen as it was not tainted by the worship of other gods.

After the death of Akhenaten, the city was abandoned, and the old religions which had been suppressed
quickly re-established their control over Egypt. It is thought that this return was started by Smenkhkare, and
completed by Tutankhaten who changed his name to Tutankhamun and moved his capital from Akhetaten
to Memphis.
Akhenaten was a Ruler of Egypt during the period known as the 18th Dynasty and was married to Nefertiti. He ascended to the throne as Amenhotep IV, succeeding his father Amenhotep III. Akhenaten's brief reign, only about 16 years, happened at a difficult time in Egyptian history and many scholars maintain that Akhenaten was responsible for this decline, but evidence suggests that it had already started.

Akhenaten, possibly in a move to lessen the political power of the Priests, introduced the worship of one god, the Aten, or Sun disk. This meant that the Pharaoh, not the priesthood, was the ONLY link between the population and the Aten which effectively ended the power of the various temples and priests.

It is interesting to note that when Akhenaten's successors, the generals Ay and Horemheb, established the temples of Amun they selected their priests from the military, enabling the Pharaoh to keep tighter controls over the religious orders. The cult of the Aten is considered by some to be a predecessor of modern monotheism.

Akhenaten is perhaps unfairly not credited with being a particularly successful Pharaoh. Records seem to indicate that he allowed Egyptian influence wane but this may not be true. These ideas are based on the famous Amarna letters found in Akhenaten in many of which Egyptian vassal cities plead for assistance, but no replies are preserved.

As there is no surviving record of Egyptian territory being lost at this time it is possible that Akhenaten was merely skillfully playing one city against the other to achieve through diplomacy. Later Pharaohs attempted to erase all memories of Akhenaten and his religion. Much of the distinctive art of the period was destroyer and the buildings dismantled to be reused. It is interesting to note that the destruction was directed at Akhenaten personally and not at the god Aten, who in later dynasties returned as a minor position in Egyptian religion.

**Tutankhamun**

Tutankhamun came to the throne at age nine and ruled until his death at about age 18. During his reign he brought peace to his kingdom, by restoring worship of the Egyptian deity Amon. He was not an important king, but is so well known because of the treasures of his tomb, which was found virtually intact. Many other tombs fell to the grave robbers.

In November 1922, an excavation by Howard Carter and funded by Lord Carnarvon, uncovered the tomb of King Tutankhamun. When they poked a hole through the debris they could see gold statues, strange replicas of animals, chariots and furniture. All were in the tomb to accompany him on his journey in to the afterlife.
The final breakthrough to the 3000 year old plus burial chamber was on the 17th Feb 1923 in front of invited guests. When Carter and Carnavon reached this chamber they were overwhelmed by the sight of so much gold. King Tut's tomb had escaped graverobbers as others did not. His body was elaborately dressed for a long journey and perfumed with spices and surrounded with flowers, food and wine. Casts had been taken by goldsmiths, so they could model the coffin, and sculptors worked on images of the dead king. His body was wrapped in gold tissue and he wore gold collars. Over his head he wore a mask of red and white gold, and blue faience - tin glazed earthenware. Eventually all the treasures of King Tut's tomb were moved to the Cairo Museum, only the mummy of the boy king remained in the tomb. It was closed to the public in 1991 because of deterioration.

**Ramses II**

Ramses II was the third king of the 19th dynasty of ancient Egypt, and is often cited as the most powerful of the Pharaohs, or simply "Ramses the Great". Named for his grandfather, Ramses I, he was appointed as successor to the throne when he was only 14, and took his first wife almost immediately. Even before assuming full power he was regarded as co-ruler with his father, Pharaoh Seti I.

In the fourth year of his rule, his armies invaded Syria and went to war against the Hittites, culminating in the bloody Battle of Kadesh. Despite Egypt's eventual retreat, Ramses often spoke of his own heroism on the battlefield, including implausible tales of being cornered alone, yet single-handedly defeating numerous enemy soldiers. Several years after Kadesh, he again led Egypt in war against the hated Hittites, but after more than a decade of bloody war he consented to a peace treaty, which led to a long period of general peace and prosperity for both peoples.

He reigned for more than 66 years, and had about 200 wives, 100 sons, and 60 daughters. Two of his daughters were eventually "promoted" to become his wives, and after peace had been accomplished with the Hittites, Ramses took the eldest daughter of the Hittite king as another wife. His other accomplishments include putting down several uprisings among his own people, and the construction of some of Egypt's most famous monuments and architecture, including many large statues of himself. He also oversaw the construction of the Ramesseum, a temple built solely to honor him.

Though the factual evidence is scant, Ramses II has traditionally been identified as the Pharaoh who ruled during the Jewish exodus from Egypt, as reported in Biblical and Hebrew scriptures. If so, then Moses would have been adopted into Ramses' family as a child.
FEATURED SOURCE B:

Khan Academy Ancient Egypt Video (14:16) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGSLyp8mmMc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGSLyp8mmMc)

FEATURED SOURCE C:

**ANCIENT MIDDLE EASTERN CIVILIZATIONS**

By Richard Hooker


**THE AKKADIANS c.2340–2125 BCE**

The Akkadians were a Semitic people living on the Arabic peninsula during the great flourishing period of the Sumerian city-states. Although we don’t know much about early Akkadian history and culture, we do know that as the Akkadians migrated north, they came in increasing conflict with the Sumerian city-states, and in 2340 BCE, the great Akkadian military leader, Sargon, conquered Sumer and built an Akkadian empire stretching over most of the Sumerian city-states and extending as far away as Lebanon. Sargon based his empire in the city of Akkad, which became the basis of the name of his people. This great capital of the largest empire humans had ever seen up until that point later became the city of Babylon, which was the commercial and cultural center of the Middle East for almost two thousand years.

But Sargon's ambitious empire lasted for only a blink of an eye in the long time spans with which we measure Mesopotamian history. In 2125, the Sumerian city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia rose up in revolt, and the Akkadian empire fell before a renewal of Sumerian city-states.

The Akkadians were Semites, that is, they spoke a language drawn from a family of languages called Semitic languages (the term "Semite" is a modern designation taken from the Hebrew Scriptures; Shem was a son of Noah and the nations descended from Shem are the Semites). These languages include Hebrew, Arabic, Assyrian, and Babylonian. After the final end of Sumerian power and civilization around 2000 BCE, the area came under the exclusive control of Semitic peoples for centuries.
After the last Sumerian dynasty fell around 2000 BCE, Mesopotamia drifted into conflict and chaos for almost a century. Around 1900 BCE, a group of Semites called the Amorites had managed to gain control of most of the Mesopotamian region. Like the Akkadians, the Amorites centralized the government over the individual city-states and based their capital in the city of Babylon, which was originally called Akkad and served as the center of the Amorite empire. For this reason, the Amorites are called the Old Babylonians and the period of their ascendancy over the region, which lasted from 1900-1600 BC, is called the Old Babylonian period.

The Sumerian monarchy underwent significant changes; in order to justify the enormous power the monarch enjoyed, the Old Babylonians believed that the monarch was a god and had a divine origin. This powerful new monarchy invented new ways to administer the state and its resources: taxation and involuntary military service. Above all, the greatest innovation was centralization. While the Sumerian civilization consisted of independent and autonomous city-states, the Old Babylonian state was a behemoth of dozens of cities. In order to make this system work, power and autonomy was taken from the individual cities and invested in the monarch. As a result, an entirely new set of laws were invented by the Old Babylonians: laws which dealt with crimes against the state.

It is in the realm of law that the Sumerian state was most dramatically changed by the Amorites. While law among the Sumerians was administered jointly by individuals and the state, the Old Babylonians allowed the state to more actively pursue and punish criminals. The punishments became dramatically more draconian: the death penalty was applied to many more crimes, including “bad behavior in a bar”.

Perhaps the most important legal text in history is an Old Babylonian code of laws written by Hammurabi (around 1792-1750 BCE), the most famous of the Old Babylonian monarchs. This code, called the Code of Hammurabi (I wonder why?) is generally regarded as Sumerian in spirit, but with all the harshness of the Old Babylonian penalties.

Although we know nothing of Old Babylonian religion, they seem to have adopted whole-cloth the religion of the Sumerians. We do know that the Amorites lived in close contact with the Sumerians for a long time preceding their ascendancy over the region, so it’s possible that they gradually adopted Sumerian religion over several centuries. The Amorites did, however, import a new god into Sumerian religion, Marduk, which they elevated to the supreme position over the other gods. Like the Sumerians, the Amorites did not believe that life after death held any promise or threat, so like the Sumerians, Amorite religion ruthlessly focused on this world.

Among the great literary achievements of the Old Babylonians was the compilation of a series of Sumerian stories surround the legendary king of Uruk, Gilgamesh. This collection tells how this king destroyed the demon of the Lebanese cedar forests, defied the gods, and discovered the secret of the flood and its survivor. The Assyrian version of the collection is part of your reading in English.
Roaring into history from mysterious origins, the Hittites would rule a great empire that stretched from Mesopotamia to Syria and Palestine. The Hittites are shrouded in fog and mystery; we don't know where they came from, and for a long time the language they spoke was undecipherable. In the end, it turns out they were Indo-European, that is, they spoke a language from the Indo-European language family, which includes English, German, Greek, Latin, Persian, and the languages of India. Their invasion spelled the end of the Old Babylonian empire in Mesopotamia (1900-1600 BCE), and like so many others before them, the invaders adopted the ways of the conquered; after the conquest of Mesopotamia, the Hittites adopted the laws, religion, and the literature of the Old Babylonians thus continuing the long heritage of Sumerian culture.

Their empire was at its greatest from 1600-1200 BCE, and even after the Assyrians gained control of Mesopotamia after 1300 BCE, the Hittite cities and territories thrived independently until 717 BCE, when the territories were finally conquered by Assyrians and others.

The Hebrew Scriptures have little to say about the Hittites, and the Egyptians regarded them as barbarians. In fact, from 1300-1200 BC, the Hittites waged a war against Egypt that drained both empires tragically. The Hittites themselves seem to have left few accounts of their history, so until this century no-one really knew their culture or the greatness of their political ascendancy.

But the Hittites are perhaps one of the most significant peoples in Mesopotamian history. Because their empire was so large and because their primary activity was commerce, trading with all the civilizations and peoples of the Mediterranean, the Hittites were the people primarily responsible for transmitting Mesopotamian thought, law, political structure, economic structure, and ideas around the Mediterranean, from Egypt to Greece. So the Hittites are the great traders in the culture built by the Sumerians and adopted and modified by later peoples. Because of the Hittites, when the Hebrews migrated to Canaan under Moses they found a people, the Canaanites, who were, culturally speaking, Mesopotamian.

LAW AND MONARCHY: The Hittites greatly modified the system of law they inherited from the Old Babylonians. The most extensive literature that the Hittites have left us is, in fact, decrees and laws. These laws were far more merciful than the laws of the Old Babylonians, perhaps because the Hittites were less concerned about maintaining a rigid, despotic central authority. While you could lose your life for just about everything under the Old Babylonian system of laws, including getting rowdy in a tavern, under the Hittites only a small handful of crimes were capital crimes. Even premeditated murder only resulted in a fine—a large fine, to be sure, but far preferable than losing your head. They modified the role of the monarch in that they gave the king ownership of all the land under his control; previously, under the Sumerians and Amorites, private property was allowed and the monarch only owned his own private property. Individuals were allowed control over land, which belong to the king, only by serving in the king's army. So the bulk of the population became tenant farmers.
RELIGION: The Hittites adopted many of the gods of the Sumerians and Old Babylonians. The odd thing about the Hittites, though, is that they seemed to have recognized that all gods were legitimate gods. Whenever they conquered a people, they adopted that people's gods into their religious system. As far as history is concerned, this has tremendous consequences for the history of the Hebrews. The Assyrians seem to have adopted the same tolerance towards other religions, which allowed the Jewish faith to persist after the Jewish state was decimated by the Assyrians. And the Assyrians seem to have continued the same tendency to adopt the gods of conquered people, so the Assyrian conquerors of Palestine adopted the Hebrew god, Yahweh, into their religion. This eventually led to the only major religious schism in Hebrew history, the schism between Jews and Samaritans (there are still Samaritans alive today).

THE ASSYRIANS c.1170 – 612 BCE

The Assyrians were Semitic people living in the northern reaches of Mesopotamia; they have a long history in the area, but for most of that history they are subjugated to the more powerful kingdoms and peoples to the south. Under the monarch, Shamshi-Adad, the Assyrians attempted to build their own empire, but Hammurabi soon crushed the attempt and the Assyrians disappear from the historical stage. Eventually the Semitic peoples living in northern Mesopotamia were invaded by another Asiatic people, the Hurrians, who migrated into the area and began to build an empire of their own. But the Hurrian dream of empire was soon swallowed up in the dramatic growth of the Hittite empire, and the young Hurrian nation was swamped. After centuries of attempts at independence, the Assyrians finally had an independent state of their own since the Hittites did not annex Assyrian cities. For the next several hundred years, the balance of power would shift from the north to the south.

Beginning with the monarch, Tukulti-Ninurta (1235-1198 BCE), Assyria began its first conquests, in this case the conquest of Babylon. The Assyrian dream of empire began with the monarch, Tiglat-Pileser (1116-1090 BCE), who extended Assyrian dominance to Syria and Armenia. But the greatest period of conquest occurred between 883 and 824, under the monarchies of Ashurnazirpal II (883-859 BCE) and Shalmeneser III (858-824 BCE), who conquered all of Syria and Palestine, all of Armenia, and, the prize of prizes, Babylon and southern Mesopotamia. The Assyrian conquerors invented a new policy towards the conquered: in order to prevent nationalist revolts by the conquered people, the Assyrians would force the people they conquered to migrate in large numbers to other areas of the empire. Besides guaranteeing the security of an empire built off of conquered people of different cultures and languages, these mass deportations of the populations in the Middle East, Mesopotamia, and Armenia, turned the region into a melting pot of diverse cultures, religions, and languages. Whereas there would be little cultural contact between the conquered and the conquerors in early Mesopotamian history, under the Assyrians the entire area became a vast experiment in cultural mixing. It was the Assyrian monarch, Sargon II (721-705 BCE), who first forcefully relocated the Israelites after the conquest of Israel, the northern kingdom of the Hebrews (the ten lost tribes of Israel). Although this was a comparatively mild deportation and perfectly in line with Assyrian practice, it marks the historical beginning of the Jewish diaspora. This chapter in the Jewish diaspora, however, never has been really written, for the Hebrews deported from Israel seem to have blended in with Assyrian society and, by the time Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Judah (587 BCE), the southern kingdom of the Hebrews, the Israelites deported by Sargon II have disappeared nameless and faceless into the sands of northern Mesopotamia.
The monarchs of Assyria, who hated Babylon with a passion since it constantly contemplated independence and sedition, destroyed that city and set up their capital in Nineveh. Later, however, feeling that the Babylonian god, Marduk, was angry at them, they rebuilt the city and returned the idol of Marduk to a temple in Babylon. The last great monarch of Assyria was Ashurbanipal (668-626 BCE), who not only extended the empire, but also began a project of assembling a library of tablets of all the literature of Mesopotamia. Thirty thousand tablets still remain of Ashurbanipal’s great library in the city of Nineveh; these tablets are our single greatest source of knowledge of Mesopotamian culture, myth, and literature.

After Ashurbanipal, the great Assyrian empire began to crumble; the greatest pressure on the empire came from their old and bitter enemies, the Babylonians. Aided by another Semitic people, the Medes, the Babylonians led by Nabopolassar eventually conquered the Assyrian capital of Nineveh and burned it to the ground, ending forever Assyrian dominance in the region.

THE ASSYRIAN STATE: Simply put, the Assyrian state was forged in the crucible of terror, war, invasion, and conquest. The upper, land-holding classes consisted almost entirely of military commanders who grew wealthy from the spoils taken in war. The army was the largest standing army ever seen in the Middle East or Mediterranean. The exigencies of war excited technological innovation which made the Assyrians almost unbeatable: iron swords, lances, metal armor, and battering rams made them a fearsome foe in battle.

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS: The odd paradox of Assyrian culture was the dramatic growth in science and mathematics; this can be in part explained by the Assyrian obsession with war and invasion. Among the great mathematical inventions of the Assyrians were the division of the circle into 360 degrees and were among the first to invent an idea similar to longitude and latitude in geographical navigation. They also developed a sophisticated medical science which greatly influenced medical science as far away as Greece.

THE CHALDEANS 612-539 BCE (THE NEW BABYLONIAN PERIOD)

After the fall of Assyrian power in Mesopotamia, the last great group of Semitic peoples dominated the area. Suffering mightily under the Assyrians, the city of Babylon finally rose up against its hated enemy, the city of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and burned it to the ground. The chief of the Babylonians was Nabopolassar; the Semites living in the northern part of Mesopotamia would never gain their independence again.
Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son, Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BCE). Nebuchadnezzar was the equal of all the great Mesopotamian conquerors, from Sargon onwards; he not only prevented major powers such as Egypt and Syria from making inroads on his territory, he also conquered the Phoenicians and the state of Judah (586 BCE), the southern Jewish kingdom that remained after the subjugation of Israel, the northern kingdom, by the Assyrians. In order to secure the territory of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar brought Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, the two kings of Judah (in succession) and held them in Babylon. In keeping with Assyrian practice, the "New Babylonians," or Chaldeans forced a large part of the Jewish population to relocate. Numbering possibly up to 10,000, these Jewish deportees were largely upper class people and craftspeople; this deportation marks the beginning of the Exile in Jewish history (The Babylonian Captivity).

The Chaldeans were well known for their science and astronomy. Priest-astrologers pioneered the study of the movement of the stars, planets, and the sun. They kept systematically precise accounts of these astronomical observations along with records of historical events in a book called “The Chronicle.” In fact the very term “Chaldean” became synonymous with “an astronomer.”

Under Nebuchadnezzar, the city of Babylon was rebuilt with great splendor; it would eventually become one of the most magnificent human cities in the area of the Middle East and Mediterranean. According to legend he built a royal garden in the city along the terraces and roofs of his palaces for his wife who grew up in the mountains and missed her homeland living in the flat plains of Mesopotamia. These gardens were known to the Greeks as the “Hanging Gardens of Babylon” and became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. But all was not perfect beneath the shining surface; there still existed a number of cities that were loyal to the Assyrians. The entire period dominated by the Babylonians, in fact, is a period of great unrest as Babylonian hegemony was continually tested by philo-Assyrians. This conflict slammed the door on the Babylonian empire after a dynasty of only five kings. Babylon in 555 BCE came under the control of a king loyal to the Assyrians, Nabonidus (555-539 BCE), who attacked Babylonian culture at its heart: he placed the Assyrian moon-god, Sin, above the Babylonian’s principal god, Marduk, who symbolized not only the faith of Babylon but the very city and people itself. Angered and bitter, the priests and those faithful to Babylon would welcome Cyrus the Conqueror of Persia into their city and end forever Semitic domination of Mesopotamia. The center of the Middle Eastern world shifted to Cyrus’s capital, Susa, and it would shift again after the Greeks and then the Romans. For almost two and a half centuries, Mesopotamia and Babylon at its center, dominated the landscape of early civilization in the Middle East to be finally eclipsed by the rising sun of the Indo-European cultures to the north and to the west.

PHOENICIA c. 2000-600 BCE but height (1000-700 BCE)

Phoenicia is the ancient designation of a narrow strip of territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, now largely in modern Lebanon. The territory, about 320 km (about 200 mi) long and from 8 to 25 km (5 to 15 mi) wide, was bounded on the east by the Lebanon Mountains. The southern boundary was Mount Carmel; the northern boundary was generally accepted to be the Eleutherus River, now called the Kabīr, which forms the northern boundary of Lebanon.
ORIGINS: Although its inhabitants had a homogeneous civilization and considered themselves a single nation, Phoenicia was not a unified state but a group of city-kingdoms, one of which usually dominated the others. The most important of these cities were Simyra, Zarephath (Sarafand), Byblos, Jubeil, Arwad (Rouad), Acco (‘Akko), Sidon (Şaydā), Tripolis (Tripoli), Tyre (Sur), and Berytus (Beirut). The two most dominant were Tyre and Sidon, which alternated as sites of the ruling power.

The Phoenicians, called Sidonians in the Old Testament and Phoenicians by the Greek poet Homer, were Semites, related to the Canaanites of ancient Palestine. Historical research indicates that they founded their first settlements on the Mediterranean coast about 2500 BCE. Early in their history, they developed under the influence of the Sumerian and Akkadian cultures of nearby Babylon. About 1800 BCE Egypt, which was then beginning to acquire an empire in the Middle East, invaded and took control of Phoenicia. Beginning about 1400 BCE raids of Egyptian territory by the Hittites weakened the Egyptian empire, giving the Phoenician cities an opportunity to revolt. By about 1200 BCE the Phoenicians were independent of Egypt.

A NATION OF TRADERS: With self-rule, the Phoenicians became the most notable traders and sailors of the ancient world. The fleets of the coast cities traveled throughout the Mediterranean and even into the Atlantic Ocean, and other nations competed to employ Phoenician ships and crews in their navies. In connection with their maritime trade the city-kingdoms founded many colonies, notably Utica and Carthage in north Africa, on the islands of Rhodes and Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea, and Tarshish in southern Spain. Tyre was the leader of the Phoenician cities before they were subjugated, once again, by Assyria during the 8th century BC. When Assyria fell during the late 7th century BCE, Phoenicia, except for Tyre, which succeeded in maintaining its independence until about 538 BCE, was incorporated into the Chaldean Empire of Nebuchadnezzar II and, in 539 BCE, became part of the Persian Empire. Under Persian rule Sidon became the leading city of Phoenicia.

When Alexander the Great of Macedonia invaded Asia and defeated Persia in 333 BCE, Sidon, Arwad, and Byblos capitulated to Macedonia. Tyre again refused to submit, and it took Alexander a 7-month siege in 332 BCE to capture the city. After this defeat the Phoenicians gradually lost their separate identity as they were absorbed into the Greco-Macedonian empire. The cities became Hellenized, and, in 64 BCE, even the name of Phoenicia disappeared, when the territory was made part of the Roman province of Syria.

CONTRIBUTIONS: The most important Phoenician contribution to civilization was the alphabet. Purple dye, called Tyrian purple, and the invention of glass, are also ascribed to the Phoenicians. Their industries, particularly the manufacture of textiles and dyes, metalworking, and glassmaking, were notable in the ancient world, and Phoenician cities were famous for their pantheistic religion. Each city had its special deity, usually known as its Baal, or lord, and in all cities the temple was the center of civil and social life. The most important Phoenician deity was Astarte.

FEATURED SOURCE D:

Khan Academy Mesopotamia Video (9:23) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GQdh2eGP-Y
Student Generated Questions (this is done throughout the inquiry)

It is important to have students involved in the inquiry process; because of this, ask students to share questions and curiosities they have regarding the compelling question. These questions can be recorded during the inquiry process. Below are some suggested prompts to ask students.

- What questions came up during class?
- What are you wondering about?
- What information do you (still) need to answer the compelling question?
- How can you further your understanding of this topic?
- Where can you access additional sources or information on this topic?
- Who could be an additional resource for your inquiry?

Record student questions in a “parking lot” (on a poster, white board, google doc) so that the class can readily access them. Throughout the inquiry, return to these questions and, if possible, weave them into your instruction and formative assessment. By intentionally soliciting and then addressing/using students’ questions, you develop their ability to ask questions, plan for future steps, and think about their thinking (metacognition).

NOTE: It is possible to use these students’ questions as the supporting questions for the inquiry. If you do, you may need to make adjustments to your teaching and the resources identified for this inquiry.

Additional Support/Scaffolds/Options

Readings can be shortened or modified.

Videos can be replaced with other readings or videos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Question 3 (45-60 Minutes)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Question</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Performance Task</strong></td>
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| **Featured Source(s)** | A. Enkidu’s dream from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (primary source)  
B. The Papyrus of Ani (primary source)  
C. Additional Resource: Synopsis of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses  
D. Additional Resource: “Mesopotamian Religion” by Joshua J. Mark |
Formative Performance Task and Instructional Approach

Students will read the short stories that demonstrate religious beliefs in each civilization. As they read, they should annotate in the margins and identify quotes that clearly demonstrate each civilizations perceptions about their gods and the afterlife. There is a chart provided for them to take notes (below) comparing the two stories.

When students have completed the chart, lead a Wrap-Around discussion regarding the stories and religions. Directions for this type of discussion are below. Ask students to relate their responses to the readings and to pull specific evidence from the readings. Consider using these prompts:

1. Egyptian religion was...
2. The Egyptians believed their afterlife would be...
3. Mesopotamia religion was...
4. The Mesopotamians believed their afterlife would be...

Wrap-Around Discussion Directions [https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies)

Rationale
To implement the Wraparound strategy, you pose a question or prompt to the class and then have each student share aloud their quick response. This strategy provides an efficient way for all students in a classroom to share their ideas about a question, topic, or text, revealing common themes and ideas in students’ thinking. Wraparound activities can also be provocative discussion starters.

Procedure

1. **Provide a Prompt**
   Any question could be used as a prompt for a wraparound activity. Fill-in-the-blank statements such as “Justice is...” are especially effective when used with this strategy so some examples are provided above that match the topic. Teachers often use the following prompt with the Wraparound strategy as a way to elicit students’ responses to a particular text they have recently read or viewed: “What words or phrases come to mind after seeing/reading this text?” Students should be given a minute or two to think about their responses before being asked to share.

2. **Students Share Responses**
   One at a time, students share their brief responses. It often works best to have students simply respond in the order in which they are sitting. This way, you do not have to call on students to respond; once their neighbor has had a turn, students know it is their turn to present. In a wraparound activity, all students typically share their ideas, although it is possible to allow students to say “pass.” Be sure to tell students not to say anything except the particular response, because otherwise the activity will lose the desired effect.

3. **Listen for Common Themes or Surprises**
   After everyone has shared, you can ask students to report back on common themes that have emerged or on something that surprised them.
Directions: Read the stories regarding Enkidu and Ani. As you are reading, identify and record information in the below chart that demonstrates the Mesopotamian and the Egyptian perceptions of their gods, religion and the afterlife. Use specific quotes from the stories.

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<th>Death of Enkidu</th>
<th>Papyrus of Ani</th>
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Featured Sources:

**FEATURED SOURCE A**

**The Death of Enkidu** *(excerpt from the Epic of Gilgamesh)*

https://archive.org/stream/TheEpicofGilgamesh_201606/eog_djvu.txt

Gilgamesh rejects the advances of Ishtar, goddess of love. In revenge, she brings the mighty Bull of Heaven down to threaten Uruk. Gilgamesh and Enkidu kill the bull, but Enkidu dreams that the gods have decreed his death for helping to slaughter the bull and Humbaba. Enkidu is furious at his fate until Shamash, the sun god, allays some of his anger. Then Enkidu describes another dream about death.

As Enkidu slept alone in his sickness, in bitterness of spirit he poured out his heart to his friend. “It was I who cut down the cedar, I who leveled the forest, I who slew Humbaba and now see what has become of me. Listen, my friend, this is the dream I dreamed last night. The heavens roared, and earth rumbled back an answer; between them stood I before an awful being, the somber-faced man-bird; he had directed on me his purpose. His was a vampire face, his foot was a lion’s foot, his hand was an eagle’s talon. He fell on me and his claws were in my hair, he held me fast and I smothered; then he transformed me so that my arms became wings covered with feathers. He turned his stare towards me, and he led me away to the palace of Irkalla, the Queen of Darkness, to the house from which none who enters ever returns, down the road from which there is no coming back.

“There is the house whose people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat. They are clothed like birds with wings for covering, they see no light, they sit in darkness. I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away forever; rulers and princes, all those who once wore kingly crowns and ruled the world in the days of old. They who had stood in the place of the gods like Anu and Enlil, stood now like servants to fetch baked meats in the house of dust, to carry cooked meat and cold water from the water-skin. In the house of dust which I entered were high priests and acolytes, priests of the incantation and of ecstasy; there were servers of the temple, and there was Etana, that king of Kish whom the eagle carried to heaven in the days of old. I saw also Samuqan, god of cattle, and there was Ereshkigal the Queen of the Underworld; and Belit-Sheri squatted in front of her, she who is a recorder of the gods and keeps the book of death. She held a tablet from which she read. She raised her head, she saw me and spoke: ‘Who has brought this one here?’ Then I awoke like a man drained of blood who wanders alone in a waste of rushes; like one whom the bailiff has seized and his heart pounds with terror.”
FEATURED SOURCE B

Papyrus of Ani, The Egyptian Book of the Dead
c. 1200 BCE
http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Books/Papyrus_Ani.html

Translated by E. A. Wallis Budge

*In the Egyptian belief system, Ra was the sun god and Osiris was the god of the dead. The excerpt below is from the Papyrus of Ani, a wonderfully preserved papyrus scroll (though Egyptologists describe it as a "book") entombed with the scribe Ani. The purpose of such scrolls was to assist the deceased in the afterlife, where every person possessed three spirits called the Ka, the Ba, and the Akh. These spirits could survive only if the deceased's body did not decay.*

A Hymn of Praise to Ra When He Riseth in the Eastern Part of Heaven:

Behold, the Osiris Ani, the scribe of the holy offerings of all the gods, saith: Homage to thee, Thou art seated on thy throne, thou risest up in the sky, illumining thy mother [Nut], thou art seated on thy throne as the king of the gods. The goddess Maat embraceth thee at the two seasons of the day. May Ra give glory, and power, and truth-speaking, to the KA of the Osiris the Scribe Ani, who speaketh truth before Osiris, and who saith: Hail, O all ye gods of the House of the Soul, who weigh heaven and earth in a balance, and who give celestial food [to the dead]. Hail, Tatun, [who art] One, thou creator of mortals [and] of the Companies of the Gods of the South and of the North, of the West and of the East, ascribe ye praise to Ra, the lord of heaven, the KING, Life, Strength, and Health, the maker of the gods. Thoth and the goddess Maat mark out thy course for thee day by day. Thine enemy the Serpent hath been given over to the fire. The gods rejoice when they see Ra crowned upon his throne, and when his beams flood the world with light. The majesty of this holy god setteth out on his journey, and he goeth onwards until he reacheth the land of Manu; the earth becometh light at his birth each day; he proceedeth until he reacheth the place where he was yesterday. O be thou at peace with me. Let me gaze upon thy beauties. Let me journey above the earth. Let Ra grant to me a view of the Disk (the Sun), and a sight of Ah (the Moon) unfailingly each day. Let my Ba-soul come forth to walk about hither and thither and whithersoever it pleaseth. Let my name be called out, let it be found inscribed on the tablet which recordeth the names of those who are to receive offerings. Let meals from the sepulchral offerings be given to me in the presence [of Osiris], as to those who are in the following of Horus. Let there be prepared for me a seat in the Boat of the Sun on the day wheron the god saileth. Let me be received in the presence of Osiris in the Land of Truth-speaking-the Ka of Osiris Ani.
When we try to make some sense out of the many Egyptian gods and goddesses, we must keep two important facts in mind. First, early in Egyptian history, lower (north) Egypt and upper (south) Egypt was unified under one ruler. This union resulted in the merging of several cultural traditions. Second, because ancient Egyptian civilization existed for more than three thousand years, the deities and myths gradually changed over time as a result of new ideas, contact with other peoples, and changing cultural values.

One of the best-known legends in Egyptian mythology regarding the god Osiris, revolves around a deity who at one time may have been a local ruler in the Nile River's delta. Originally he was a god associated with the city of Busiris in the Delta and is an example of a regional god who gained countrywide acceptance.

According to the myth, Osiris was the king of Egypt who was killed by his jealous brother Seth. This evil brother then cut up Osiris' body and scattered the parts throughout Egypt. Osiris had a faithful wife Isis (depicted with cow horns and a solar disk on her head) who, along with her sister Nephthys, gathered the pieces together. Using her magical abilities, Isis put the pieces back together, but Osiris could never again live like the other gods. He, therefore, reigned as lord of the underworld, while his son, Horus, became the ruler of Egypt (see below). Osiris is represented as a mummified king.

Because the legend told of Osiris' death and rebirth, the Egyptians honored him as the god of the dead. He is depicted as a mummy holding the crook and flail, the insignia of kingship. During the Old Kingdom (ca. 2750-2250 B.C.), he became associated with the deceased pharaoh in the afterlife. During the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2025-1627/1606 B.C.), when many of the funerary rituals became available to much of the population, all individuals became associated with Osiris upon their deaths.

Horus, the falcon-headed son of Osiris and Isis, is the hero of a legend related to the Osiris myth. The focus of this legend is on a battle between Horus and his uncle Seth for the throne of Egypt. This battle was very intense because Horus also wanted to avenge his father's murder. Horus eventually defeated Seth and became the ruler of Egypt (the kings of Egypt were considered to be Horus on earth). During the course of the battle, however, Seth tore out and broke Horus' eye by smashing it on the ground. Another god, Thoth, picked up the eye and restored it. This eye became a very powerful amulet known as the wedjet-eye and is frequently seen in tombs or in jewelry.

Thoth, the restorer of the eye, is generally depicted with the head of an ibis, a common Egyptian bird. Thoth was the scribe of the gods and was believed to have invented writing. He possessed wonderful magic and was also associated with the moon and time. Sometimes a baboon represents him, when he is depicted as a whole animal rather than a man with a baboon's head.
As the religion of Egypt evolved, various gods gained importance. Hundreds of years after the pyramids were built, the major center of government moved south to the city of Thebes, and the local god of that city became the head of the Egyptian pantheon. This was the god Amun and a very large and impressive temple was built in his honor near the modern village of Karnack. Although the ram and the goose were considered to be the sacred animals of Amun, the god himself is always portrayed as a man. Amun's wife was the goddess Mut. Mut is often portrayed as a woman wearing a vulture headdress, but can also have a lion's head or be represented as a vulture.

Another goddess was Hathor, who took several forms, all related to a cow. Sometimes she was depicted with a cow's head or just with the ears or horns of a cow. At other times a whole cow was used as her representation. A major deity, she was identified with beauty and music. Many temples were built in her honor.

The goddess Sekhmet represented war, destruction, and pestilence. Usually portrayed with the head of a lion on a woman's body, she was also associated in another aspect with the cat.

Another deity who was often portrayed with the head of an animal is Anubis. He had the head of a doglike animal called a jackal. Because jackals lived in the low desert where cemeteries were located, Anubis came to be honored as the god of the necropolis. Anubis also served as the god of embalming, in charge of preparing bodies for burial.

We do not know why the Egyptians chose to associate some gods and goddesses with animals or why a certain animal species came to represent a specific deity. All the animals that developed sacred associations, however, were native to Egypt at some time during its history.
In ancient Mesopotamia, the meaning of life was for one to live in concert with the gods. Humans were created as co-laborers with their gods to hold off the forces of chaos and to keep the community running smoothly.

MESOPOTAMIAN CREATION MYTH

According to the Mesopotamian creation myth, the Enuma Elish, (meaning, 'When on High') life began after an epic struggle between the elder gods and the younger. In the beginning there was only water swirling in chaos and undifferentiated between fresh and bitter. These waters separated into two distinct principles: the male principle, Apsu, which was fresh water and the female principle, Tiamat, salt water. From the union of these two principles all the other gods came into being.

These younger gods were so loud in their daily concourse with each other that they came to annoy the elders, especially Apsu and, on the advice of his Vizier, he decided to kill them. Tiamat, however, was shocked at Apsu's plot and warned one of her sons, Ea, the god of wisdom and intelligence. With the help of his brothers and sisters, Ea put Apsu to sleep and then killed him. Out of the corpse of Apsu, Ea created the earth and built his home (though, in later myths 'the Apsu' came to mean the watery home of the gods or the realm of the gods). Tiamat, upset now over Apsu's death, raised the forces of chaos to destroy her children herself. Ea and his siblings fought against Tiamat and her allies, her champion, Quingu, the forces of chaos and Tiamat's creatures, without success until, from among them, rose the great storm god Marduk. Marduk swore he would defeat Tiamat if the gods would proclaim him their king. This agreed to, he entered into battle with Tiamat, killed her and, from her body, created the sky. He then continued on with the act of creation to make human beings from the remains of Quingu as help-mates to the gods.

According to historian D. Brendan Nagle,

Despite the gods' apparent victory, there was no guarantee that the forces of chaos might not recover their strength and overturn the orderly creation of the gods. Gods and humans alike were involved in the perpetual struggle to restrain the powers of chaos, and they each had their won role to play in this dramatic battle. The responsibility of the dwellers of Mesopotamian cities was to provide the gods with everything they needed to run the world.
CITIES, TEMPLES, AND GODS

The gods, in turn, took care of their human helpers in every aspect of their lives. From the most serious concerns of praying for continued health and prosperity to the simplest, the lives of the Mesopotamians revolved around their gods and so, naturally, the homes of the gods on earth: the temples.

Every city had, as its center, the temple of the patron god of that city. The most famous holy city was Nippur where the god Enlil legitimized the rule of kings and presided over pacts (so important a center was Nippur that it survived, intact, into the Christian and then the Muslim periods and continued, until 800 CE, as an important religious center for those new faiths). The patron god or goddess of a city had the largest temple in the city, but there were smaller temples and shrines to other gods throughout. The god of a particular temple was thought to literally inhabit that building and most temples were designed with three rooms, all heavily ornamented, the innermost being the room of the god or goddess where that deity resided in the form of his or her statue. Every day the priests of the temple were required to tend to the needs of the god. Again according to Nagle,

“Daily, to the sound of music, hymns, and prayers, the god was washed, clothed, perfumed, fed and entertained by minstrels and dancers. In clouds of incense, meals of bread, cakes, fruit and honey were set before the deity, along with offerings of beer, wine and water...On feast days the statues of the deities were taken in solemn procession through the courtyard [and] the streets of the city accompanied by singing and dancing.”

The gods of every city were accorded this respect and, it was believed, they needed to make the rounds of the city at least once a year in the same way a good ruler would ride out from his palace to inspect his city regularly.

The gods could even visit each other on occasion as in the case of the god Nabu whose statue was carried once a year from Borsippa to Babylon to visit his father Marduk. Marduk, himself, was honored greatly in this same way at the New Year Festival in Babylon when his statue was carried out of the temple, through the city, and to a special little house outside the city walls where he could relax and enjoy some different scenery. Throughout this procession, the people would chant the Enuma Elish in honor of Marduk’s great victory over the forces of chaos.
MESOPOTAMIAN UNDERWORLD

The Mesopotamians not only revered their gods but also the souls of those who had gone on to the underworld. The Mesopotamian paradise (known as "Dilmun" to the Sumerians) was the land of the immortal gods and was not given the same sort of attention the underworld received. The Mesopotamian underworld, where the souls of departed humans went, was a dark and dreary land from which no one ever returned but, even so, a spirit who had not been honored properly in burial could still find ways to inflict misery on the living. As the dead were often buried under or near the home, each house had a small shrine to the dead inside (sometimes a 'chapel' built on to the existing homes of the more affluent, as seen at Ur) where daily sacrifices of food and drink were made to the spirits of the departed. If one had done one’s duty to the gods and others in the community, but still suffered some unfortunate fate, a Necromancer was consulted to see if perhaps one had offended the spirits of the dead in some way.

The famous Babylonian poem *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* of 1700 BCE (known as "the Sumerian Job" owing to its similarity to the Biblical Book of Job) makes mention of this when the speaker, Tabu-Utul-Bel (known in Sumerian as Laluralim) in questioning the cause of his suffering, says how he consulted the Necromancer, “but he opened not my understanding.” Like the Book of Job, the *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi* asks why bad things happen to good people and, in Laluralim’s case, asserts that he did nothing to offend fellow man, gods or spirits to merit the misfortune he is suffering.

DIVINATION

Divination was another important aspect of Mesopotamian religion and was developed to a high degree. A clay model of a sheep’s liver, found at Mari, indicates in great detail how a Diviner was to go about interpreting the messages found in that organ of the sheep. To the Mesopotamians, divination was a scientific method of interpreting and understanding the messages from the gods in earthly contexts. If a certain type of bird acted in an unusual way it could mean one thing, while if it acted in another, the gods were saying something different.

A man suffering with certain symptoms would be diagnosed by a diviner in one way while a woman with those same symptoms in another, depending on how the diviner read the signs presented. The great rulers of the land had their own special diviners (as later kings and generals would have their personal doctors) while the less affluent had to rely on the care provided by the local diviner.
INFLUENCE OF MESOPOTAMIAN MYTHS

The people of Mesopotamia relied on their gods for every aspect of their lives, from calling on Kulla, the god of bricks, to help in the laying of the foundation of a house, to petitioning the goddess Lama for protection, and so developed many tales concerning these deities. The myths, legends, hymns, prayers and poems surrounding the Mesopotamian gods and their interaction with the people introduced many of the plots, symbols and characters which modern-day readers are acquainted with such as

- the story of the Fall of Man (The Myth of Adapa),
- the tale of the Great Flood (The Atrahasis),
- the Tree of Life (Inanna and the Hulappu Tree),
- the tale of a wise man/prophet taken up to heaven (The Myth of Etana),
- the story of creation (The Enuma Elish),
- the quest for immortality (The Epic of Gilgamesh),
- the Dying and Reviving god figure (a deity who dies or goes into the underworld and returns to life or the surface of the world to in some way benefit the people) who is famously depicted through Inanna’s Descent to the Underworld.

These tales, among many others, became the basis for later myths in the regions the Mesopotamians traded and interacted with, most notably the land of Canaan (Phoenicia) whose people, in time, would produce the narratives which now comprise the scriptures known as the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Student Generated Questions

It is important to have students involved in the inquiry process; because of this, ask students to share questions and curiosities they have regarding the compelling question. These questions can be recorded during the inquiry process. Below are some suggested prompts to ask students.

- What questions came up during class?
- What are you wondering about?
- What information do you (still) need to answer the compelling question?
- How can you further your understanding of this topic?
- Where can you access additional sources or information on this topic?
- Who could be an additional resource for your inquiry?

Record student questions in a “parking lot” (on a poster, white board, google doc) so that the class can readily access them. Throughout the inquiry, return to these questions and, if possible, weave them into your instruction and formative assessment. By intentionally soliciting and then addressing/using students questions, you develop their ability to ask questions, plan for future steps, and think about their thinking (metacognition).

NOTE: It is possible to use these students’ questions as the supporting questions for the inquiry. If you do, you may need to make adjustments to your teaching and the resources identified for this inquiry.
**Additional Support/Scaffolds/Options**

Use Featured sources C and D for further information about the religions. Ask students to Think-Pair-Share instead of conducting a full group discussion. Have students read the stories aloud.

**Summative Performance Task**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Performance Task</th>
<th>How did geography impact the forms of government and religions in Mesopotamia and Egypt?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extension:</strong> Students can read Jared Diamond’s article regarding agriculture and the negative impact on the world and day to day life for humans.</td>
<td><a href="http://discovermagazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race">http://discovermagazine.com/1987/may/02-the-worst-mistake-in-the-history-of-the-human-race</a></td>
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**Description**

In the Summative Performance Task, students will be asked to construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “How did geography impact the development of ancient societies?” There are many products that can result from this question, but writing using the claim-evidence-commentary model helps students identify and use evidence to support their argument. It is suggested that students address the impact of geography on government in one paragraph and the impact of geography on religion in another. It is important that students clearly tie their assertions to specific characteristics of each civilization’s geography. For example, unpredictable flooding in Mesopotamia resulted in a belief that the gods could be angered and would punish the humans.

Students could also complete an evidence log or pre-writing guide but not complete a full writing on the topic.
Making Inferences: How does Geography Influence Religious Perspectives?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egyptian Geography – List Details</th>
<th>Mesopotamian Geography – List Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assess:</strong> What are the Egyptians’ Perceptions/Views of Their Natural World?</td>
<td><strong>Assess:</strong> What are the Mesopotamians’ Perceptions/Views of Their Natural World?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Infer:</strong> What Are the Egyptians’ Views of the Supernatural (Their Deities)?</td>
<td><strong>Infer:</strong> What are the Mesopotamians’ Views of the Supernatural (Their Deities)?</td>
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### Making Inferences: How does Geography Influence Political Power?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egyptian Geography – List Details</th>
<th>Mesopotamian Geography – List Details</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess: How do Egypt's geographical features affect their political/military structure?</td>
<td>Assess: How do Mesopotamia's geographical features affect their political/military structure?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Infer: Has Egypt's geography positively affected the civilization's political/military situation? Why or why not?</td>
<td>Infer: Has Mesopotamia's geography positively affected the civilization's political/military situation? Why or why not?</td>
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</table>
Student Instructions for two paragraph writing:

**Influence of Geography in Mesopotamia and Egypt Compare and Contrast Essay**

**Prompt:** Compare and contrast the impact of geography in the Nile River Valley with the Mesopotamian River Valley. In two separate paragraphs, discuss the impact of geography on:

- religion (paragraph 1)
- government (paragraph 2)

You must incorporate at least one example from a literary text, such as Gilgamesh, Hymn to the Nile, Papyrus of Ani, etc. in one of your paragraphs. Include historical evidence from each region to support your response. Use parenthetical citations for quotes and paraphrased information specific to one source or author.

**EACH paragraph must include:**

- A claim sentence (your argument sentence) that shows cause and effect. In this essay, the cause will be some aspect of geography. Be specific about what you will prove without giving away your evidence.

- At least two examples of specific evidence that demonstrates a similarity or difference (one piece of evidence for Egypt and one piece of evidence for Mesopotamia).

- Commentary (also known as analysis) that explains how each piece of evidence proves your argument. This is where you explain how the geography caused what it did (for example, you would explain how predictable flooding ultimately caused the Egyptians to have a positive view of the afterlife).

- A concluding sentence for each paragraph that ties everything together and, when necessary, transitions to the next paragraph.

**IMPORTANT Reminders:**

- Do not write one paragraph about Egypt and one paragraph about Mesopotamia. This is a compare/contrast essay and information about both regions should be included in each paragraph.

- Your claim should be one sentence and must be the first line of the paragraph. It should include information about both Egypt and Mesopotamia.

- Do not write more than two paragraphs.
Rubric for Writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>A - Includes strong claims that are complex, analytical and arguable.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - Includes claims that are specific and arguable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C - Includes attempted claims which might be general, do not include a &quot;so what&quot;, do not answer all parts of the question, or do not match all topics discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - Includes attempted claims that do not answer the question or match the topics discussed in the paragraph.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F - Lacks claims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>A - Richly supports the topic with specific evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - Supports the topic with specific evidence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C - Supports the topic with adequate evidence that may not be specific and may include some minor inaccuracies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - Includes limited evidence that is not specific, is inaccurate, or does not answer the question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F - Lacks evidence or contains evidence that does not answer the question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>A - Includes strong analytical commentary for all pieces of evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - Includes some commentary for all pieces of evidence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C - Includes limited commentary, may include additional irrelevant information, may repeat evidence as commentary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - Includes limited attempts at commentary that often does not explain how the evidence answers the question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F - Includes no commentary often just a list of facts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addresses Topic</td>
<td>A - Includes in-depth answers to all parts of the question.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - Includes general answers to all parts of the question.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C - Answers most of the question</td>
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<td>D - Only answers part of the question.</td>
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<td>F - Does not answer the question or complete the writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>A - Demonstrates a clear plan of organization that flows logically between evidence and in-depth commentary.</td>
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<td>B - Demonstrates a clear plan of organization following the claim, evidence, commentary model. Includes some transitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C - Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization that doesn't add or take away from the argument. May include a few transitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - Demonstrates a general plan of organization but may lack focus or go off on tangents that distract from the argument.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F - Demonstrate a major weakness in organization that lacks focus. Confusing to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing style</td>
<td>A - Though not without flaws, the writing shows stylistic maturity and an effective command of sentence structure and diction.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B - While not error free, the writing does not have mechanical or grammatical errors that seriously mar the writer's expression.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C - While the writing may lack clarity, it demonstrates basic control over sentence structure and word choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D - There are many grammatical errors in sentence structure and word choice. Serious spelling mistakes may distract the reader.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F - Writing contains serious distracting errors in grammar, mechanics, and or/spelling.</td>
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Taking Informed Action

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<tr>
<td>Students will be asked to write a blog post for publishing on the class website. Within the blog post, students will consider how contemporary human life is impacted by the environment in which they live. Next, they will consider examples of where technology has allowed humans to overcome the environments in which they live. Finally, students will assert an opinion about how important geography is to humans in the modern world. <strong>EXPLORE THIS BLOG POST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING INFORMED ACTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESCRIPTION/NOTE TO TEACHER:** Taking informed action can manifest itself in a variety of forms and in a range of venues: Students may express action through discussions, debates, surveys, video productions, and the like; these actions may take place in the classroom, in the school, in the local community, across the state, and around the world.

Taking Globally Informed Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking Globally Informed Action</th>
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| 1. Guide students to the UN Sustainable Development Goals website and explore the 17 goals. [UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)
2. Ask them to read through Goal 15 – “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.”
3. Ask students to consider how human use of their environment has threatened human, animal, and plant life.
4. Students will then create a plan and identify one habit or practice in their own homes that can be modified or changed in order to help with sustainability and reverse degradation of ecosystems.
5. Students will create a mini-poster or infographic (8.5x11) outlining the personal change they will make and the posters will be displayed in the classroom or school hallway. |

**Taking Informed Action: UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The [UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/) outline “a supremely ambitious and transformational vision” for humanity. These 17 goals, and their 169 targets, offer teachers and students an opportunity to frame their C3 Inquiry in a global context. By engaging classes with informed action that addresses the SDG, students nurture their global citizen competencies, disposition, and mindset.

Our decision to develop Informed Action tasks that are globally minded highlight both the benefits of social studies teaching and learning and addresses a gap in educational resources of this genre. Ultimately, teachers who use a global scope better prepare students to navigate, understand, and act in a future that is increasingly complex and interconnected.

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