

# *Ancient* Civilizations

From the Beginning of Humans to 500 A.D.



[WWW.STORIESINHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.STORIESINHISTORY.ORG)

# What We Believe

At **Stories in History**, we believe the best way for students to understand the ancient world is through meaningful stories, thoughtful discussion, and hands-on exploration. That's why our *Ancient Civilizations* course is literature-rich and rooted in project-based learning. Each unit includes carefully selected historical fiction, nonfiction, and primary-source-inspired readings that help students connect with the people and cultures of the past.

Throughout the course, students travel across the globe—from the earliest human societies to the great civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Hebrews, China, Greece, and Rome. They explore how geography shaped where people settled, how belief systems and governments developed, and how trade, innovation, and cultural exchange connected the ancient world. Along the way, students are encouraged to examine multiple perspectives and consider how these early civilizations continue to influence our world today.

Designed to be flexible and homeschool-friendly, this course blends storytelling with creative activities such as mapping, simulations, art projects, writing, research, and hands-on challenges. Our goal is to help students build strong historical understanding and critical thinking skills while fostering curiosity, empathy, and a deeper appreciation for the complexity of human history.

Thank you for allowing Stories in History to be part of your child's learning journey as they explore the ancient stories that laid the foundation for our modern world.

- Jen H.

(Founder of Stories in History)

# How it Works

## **To be done first:**

### 1. Read the **unit introduction card**.

These half-page cards introduce each unit topic. Punch a hole in the corner and keep them together with a metal ring or string. They are printed separately.

## **To be done in any order:**

### 2. Read **books**.

Choose from the picture books and chapter books listed on the Unit Introduction Page. Read as many as you'd like—you don't need to read them all. We recommend physical copies when possible, but books marked with the following symbol are also available on YouTube. 🎧

### 3. Watch **movies and/or videos**.

Choose from the suggested YouTube videos and movies in each unit to explore further. Most recommendations are rated G or PG. If a PG-13 film is listed, we clearly note it and recommend parents preview it first.

### 4. Read the **informational articles**.

As you move through the coursebook, read the embedded informational articles to learn the key topics for each unit. They're aligned with standards and include important content you won't want to miss.

### 5. Complete **activities**.

Activities range in difficulty and include worksheets, games, crafts, and more. Most require minimal supplies, and any needed materials are listed in red on the Unit Introduction pages.

Each activity is numbered to keep everything organized. For example, 1.1 is the first activity in Unit 1, and all related pages will share that number.

Some days you may read and watch a video; other days you may complete an activity. We recommend spending about 45 minutes, three times a week, to finish the course within a year.

### 6. Take the **quiz**.

These are short, 7-10 question quizzes and cover key topics from the unit.

# Common Questions

## **What are the topics covered in this course?**

- Unit 1: Early Humans
- Unit 2: Ancient Mesopotamia
- Unit 3: Ancient Egypt & Kush
- Unit 4: Ancient India & the Indus Valley
- Unit 5: Ancient Hebrews & Judaism
- Unit 6: Ancient China
- Unit 7: Ancient Greece
- Unit 8: Ancient Rome

## **Is this course parent-led or student-led?**

While we always encourage parent involvement, this course is designed for students to be able to complete on their own with some supervision or occasional involvement.

## **What ages/grades is this course designed for?**

This course is designed with a 12-year-old in mind and covers 6th–8th grade national social studies standards (C3 framework) and all of the California state 6th–grade social studies standards. The entire Ancient Civilizations course was written around these standards. With that being said, all of our curriculum can be done family-style, meaning it can be enjoyed together by learners of all ages.

## **How much time should be spent on each lesson? How many days a week should they do social studies?**

Students should plan to spend about 45 minutes per day, three times a week, to complete the course within one school year. Because the number of books and videos may vary, we recommend allowing about four weeks per unit to fully understand the key concepts.

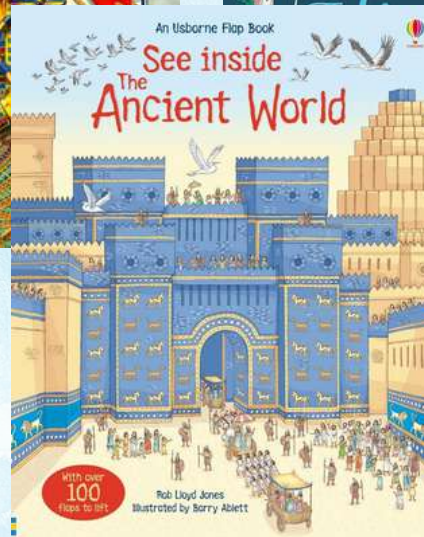
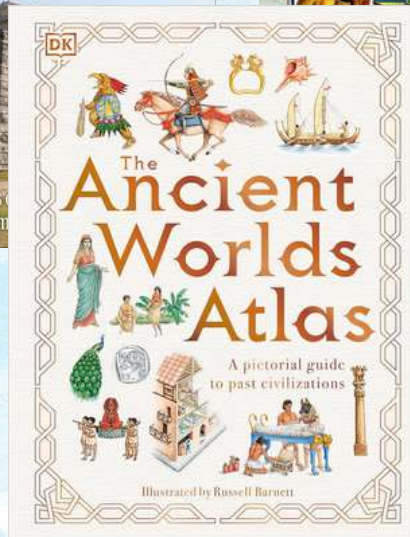
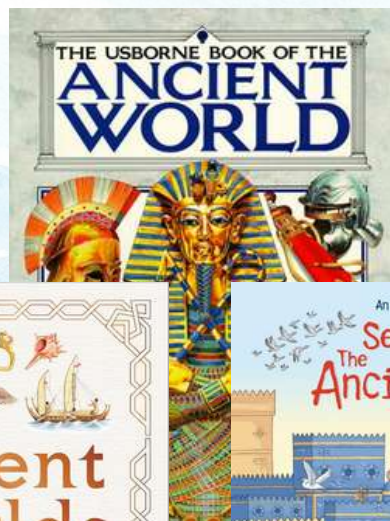
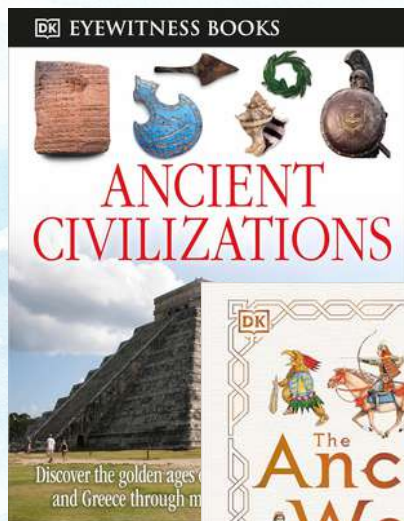
## **Are there Answer Keys?**

Yes, for many of the activities, there are Answer Keys that can be found at the end of the course book. No cheating! 😊

## Are there any books you recommend to use through the entire course?

Yes! Each unit includes its own book recommendations in the Unit Introduction Page. In addition, we've listed a small selection of illustrated encyclopedia reference books below that can be used across *all* units in the course. These books are not required, but they make excellent companions, and **we recommend purchasing at least one to use throughout the entire course.**

- DK Eyewitness Books: Ancient Civilizations
- DK: The Ancient Worlds Atlas
- The Usborne Book of the Ancient World
- See Inside the Ancient World- Usborne Flap Book
- Usborne Timelines of World History



# Worldview Questions

## **What worldview does your Ancient Civilization course align with?**

The Ancient Civilizations course is designed to be academically **neutral** and inclusive of multiple perspectives. It presents historical information using commonly referenced timelines and archaeological evidence while encouraging students to think critically, ask questions, and explore ideas rather than being told what to think. Like all Stories in History courses, the goal is to help students understand how historians study the past and how geography, culture, belief systems, and human choices shaped ancient societies.

## **Do you teach young or old earth dating?**

Stories in History does not take a position on young-earth or old-earth dating. We use commonly referenced historical and archaeological timelines for academic alignment, while focusing on civilizations, geography, culture, and historical developments. Families are encouraged to incorporate their own beliefs and perspectives as they engage with the material.

## **Is Evolution taught in this course?**

This course does not teach evolution in detail. Common viewpoints about early humans are briefly acknowledged, but the focus remains on historical study and critical thinking.

## **Optional Bible Reference Blog**

As students move through the Ancient Civilizations course, questions may arise about people, places, or events also mentioned in the Bible. For families who wish to explore these connections, we offer an optional Bible Reference Blog on our website.

The blog includes short, student-friendly articles that point to where specific events or figures are mentioned in the Bible and provide helpful historical context. These posts are optional and not required to complete the course, but they offer an additional resource for families who want to explore further.

You can find the Bible Reference Blog here:

[StoriesinHistory.org>Blogs>Ancient Civilizations- Bible Reference Blog](https://StoriesinHistory.org/Blogs/Ancient%20Civilizations-Bible%20Reference%20Blog)

# Timelines

Welcome to **Ancient Civilizations**—a journey back in time! In this course, you'll travel thousands of years into the past to explore how some of the world's earliest civilizations began, grew, and shaped the world we live in today. You'll meet powerful leaders, discover incredible inventions, and learn how people lived, worked, traded, and believed long before modern times. Get ready to explore ancient cities, follow trade routes, and uncover stories that still matter today.

As you move through the course, you'll notice something exciting: many civilizations existed **at the same time**. History is not a straight line—civilizations often **overlapped**, interacted, traded ideas, and influenced one another. While one civilization was rising, another might have already been thriving somewhere else in the world. Our timeline on the next page will help you see how these civilizations connect and how events in one place often affected what was happening somewhere else.

When studying history, you'll see dates written using **BCE/CE** or **BC/AD**, and both are used to talk about time in history. BC means Before Christ, and AD means Anno Domini, which means “in the year of the Lord” (often said to mean “after death”). BCE stands for Before Common Era, and CE stands for Common Era. These labels describe the **same years**, just using different names—so 500 BC is the same year as 500 BCE. You may see either system used in this course, and both are perfectly okay.

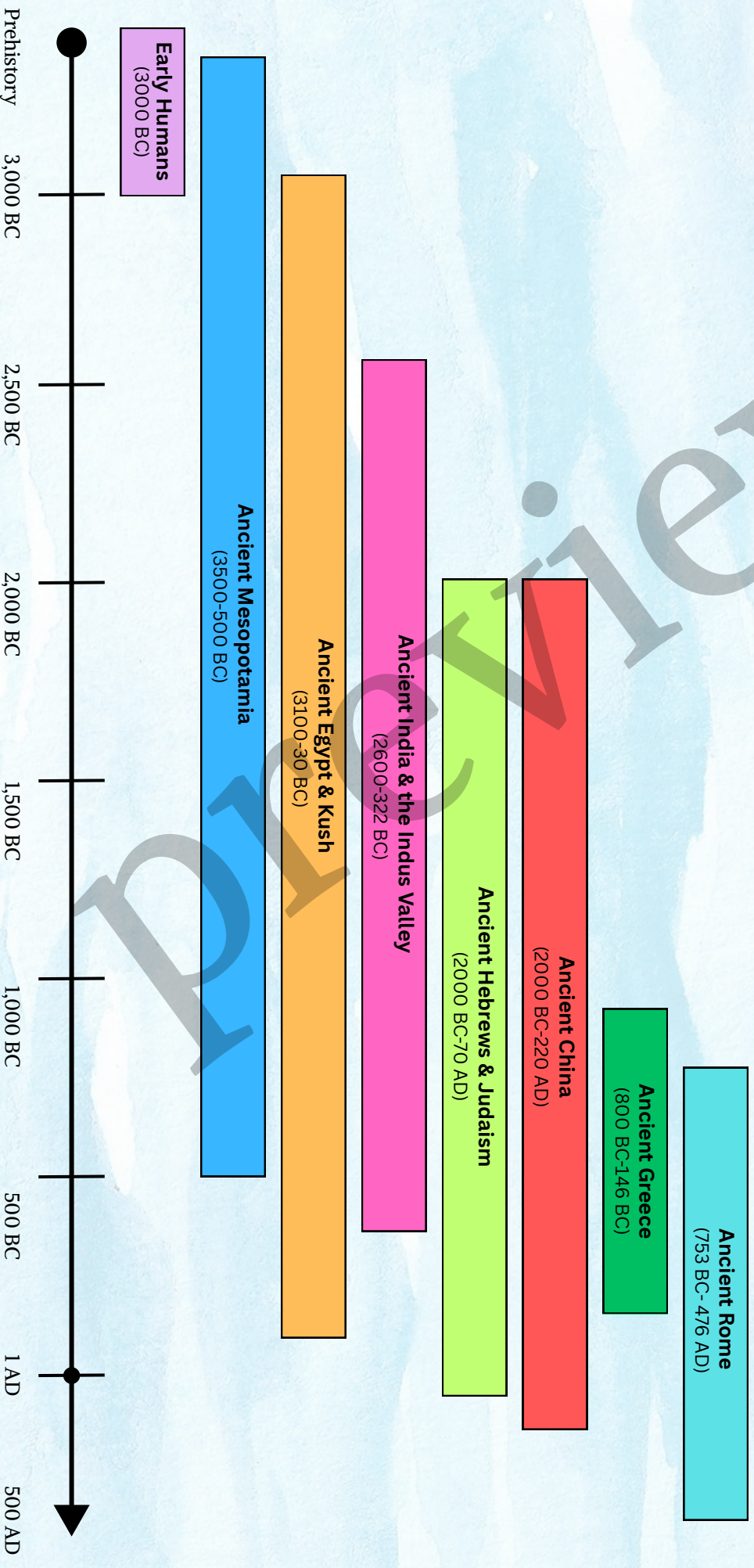
**Instructions:** On the following pages, you will find a timeline for the course. This timeline will act as a course overview. As you work through a unit, come back to this timeline and add the important information and pictures to the timeline (cut and paste). If needed, draw arrows to show which civilization they belong to.

Now let's get started—your adventure through ancient history begins here!



# Ancient Civilizations

## COURSE TIMELINE



# Timeline Facts & Pictures

**Instructions:** As you work through a unit, cut out these facts and pictures and glue them onto the timeline. You may need to draw arrows to show which civilization they are associated with.

## Early Humans

- Hunter-gatherer societies
- Use of fire & tools
- Paleolithic & Neolithic Eras



## Ancient Greece

- Philosophy and mythology
- Democracy in Athens
- Persian and Peloponnesian Wars



## Ancient Mesopotamia

- Farming & economic surplus
- First cities
- Hammurabi's Code & Cuneiform writing



## Ancient Rome

- The Roman Republic to Empire
- Roman trade routes
- Jesus Christ & spread of Christianity



## Ancient Egypt

- Pharaohs & pyramids
- Trade with Kush
- Hieroglyphics & the calendar



## Ancient India

- City planning
- Drainage & sanitation
- Hinduism & Buddhism



## Ancient Hebrews

- Migration: Mesopotamia to Canaan
- Exodus from Egypt
- Monotheism



## Ancient China

- Shang dynasty & oracle bones
- Zhou dynasty & Mandate of Heaven
- Qin unification & the Great Wall



# Early Humans

Before civilizations existed, humans lived in small groups and relied on their surroundings to meet their basic needs. These early humans developed ways to find food, create shelter, make tools, and work together in order to survive. Although much about early human life is still being studied and discussed, historians and scientists examine evidence from the past to better understand how the first people lived and how human societies eventually developed.

There are many different perspectives about what the first people looked like and how they came to be. Two commonly discussed perspectives are the biblical worldview and the evolutionary perspective, but they are not the only ways people think about human origins. As new evidence is discovered and ideas are reexamined, additional viewpoints and interpretations may emerge over time.

Some belief systems, including the **biblical worldview**, explain human origins through the Bible and other religious texts. From this perspective, the first humans, Adam and Eve, were intentionally created by God and were fully human from the beginning, with the ability to think, communicate, create, and form relationships. Supporters of this view often point to historical records, philosophical reasoning, and scientific evidence that suggest purposeful human design.

Another commonly discussed perspective is the **evolutionary perspective**. From this point of view, early humans are sometimes described as “cavemen,” and humans are believed to have evolved from ape-like ancestors over very long periods of time. Supporters of this perspective examine physical evidence such as fossils, tools, and genetic data, using dating techniques such as radiocarbon and radiometric dating. This evidence is used to study how early humans may have changed gradually through processes such as adaptation, environmental pressures, and survival.

In the study of history, the goal is not to determine which perspective is correct, but to understand how people use different types of evidence and reasoning to explain the past. Different perspectives exist because evidence can be interpreted in different ways, and new discoveries can change or expand what we think we know. Studying multiple viewpoints will help you develop critical thinking skills and recognize that history is shaped by evidence, interpretation, and perspective.



# Settlement Survival Game

**Players:** 1-6

**Ages:** Upper elementary–middle school

**Time:** 20–35 minutes



**Objective–** To have the most survival points at the end of the game.

**Set up:** Cut out the Environment, Resource, and Challenge cards. Place them each in their own pile. Place the Challenge cards facedown. Cut out your scorecard and get something to write with.

**How to Play:** Each player begins by selecting one **Environment card** of their own choice. This is where you'll live throughout the game and cannot be changed. If two players select the same card, do rock, paper, scissors to decide who gets it.

Next, each player selects **2 Resource cards**. Look at your Environment and decide what additional resources may be helpful.

Before the game begins, each player takes turns sharing which Environment and Resource cards they chose and why.

To start the game, **everyone gets 3 survival points** (already on your scorecard). The youngest player goes first.

**During your turn, you...**

1. Decide if you want to trade out a resource. You can trade one or both of your resources. You can convince another player to trade with you, or pick one that hasn't been chosen. You can only trade resources at the beginning of your turn. Discuss why you're trading resources with the group.
2. Once trading is done, you will draw a Challenge card and read it out loud. All players must follow the instructions on the Challenge card. You will either do nothing, receive, or lose survival points. Each player will keep track of their own survival points on their scoreboard.

Take turns trading resources and drawing challenge cards until a total of **10 challenge cards are read OR someone has received 10 survival points**, whichever comes first. At the end, the person with the most survival points wins. If playing alone, play multiple rounds and try to beat your score.

# Environment Cards

## RIVER VALLEY



- Advantages: Fresh water, fertile soil, easy travel
- Challenges: Flooding, crowded settlements

Hint: Great for farming and trade

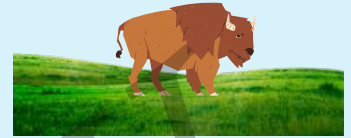
## FOREST



- Advantages: Wood, animals, plant foods
- Challenges: Thick vegetation limits travel

Hint: Good for hunting and shelter building

## PLAINS



- Advantages: Large animals, open land
- Challenges: Few natural shelters

Hint: Hunting-focused survival

## DESERT



- Advantages: Natural protection from enemies
- Challenges: Little water, extreme heat

Hint: Survival depends on water access

## COAST



- Advantages: Fish, trade routes, transportation
- Challenges: Storms, salty soil

Hint: You cannot drink salt water.

## MOUNTAIN



- Advantages: Stone, protection, minerals
- Challenges: Cold weather, difficult travel

Hint: Strong shelters and warm clothing matter

# Resource Cards

## FRESH WATER



Needed for survival and farming

## FISH



Reliable food near rivers or  
coasts

## LARGE GAME ANIMALS



Meat, hides, bones

## SMALL GAME



Easier to hunt, less food

## EDIBLE PLANTS



Seasonal food source

## FERTILE SOIL



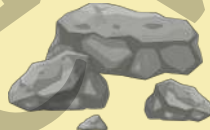
Allows farming

## WOOD



Used for tools, shelter, fire

## STONE



Used for tools and building

## CLAY



Useful for storage and shelter

## SALT



Food preservation and trade  
good

## WILD GRAINS



Food supply and population  
growth

## ANIMAL HIDES



Warm clothing, shelter,  
protection

## FIRE



Cooking food, warmth, light

## MOVEABLE HOMES



Animal migration, escape  
danger

## FRESH WATER



Needed for survival and  
farming

# Challenge Cards

## EXTREME HEAT

Temperatures rise and it is difficult to work outside during the day.

- If you live in the River Valley, Coast, or have the Fresh Water resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the desert, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## ANIMAL MIGRATION

The animals you hunt move to a different area.

- If you live in the Plains, Coast, Desert (easy travel), or have the Moveable Homes resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Mountains or Forest, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## FLOOD

Heavy rains cause nearby land to flood.

- If you live in the Desert or have the Animal Hides resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the River Valley, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## POPULATION GROWTH

More people join your settlement.

- If you live in the Forest or have the wild grains, wood, fish, or large game animals resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Plains, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## DIFFICULT TRAVEL

Mountains, deserts, or thick forests make travel hard.

- If you live in the Plains or have the Moveable Homes resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Mountains, Desert, or Forest, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## RESOURCE SHORTAGE

Insects caused a lot of the trees to rot nearby.

- If you live in the Plains or have the wood resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Mountains or Forest, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## DROUGHT

There has been very little rain for a long time. Water sources are drying up.

- If you live in the River Valley or have the Fresh Water resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Desert, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## COLD WEATHER

Winter lasts longer than usual, and food becomes harder to find.

- If you live in the Coast or have the Animal Hides, Salt Preservation, or Fire resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Mountains, subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

## WILDFIRE

There's a sudden wildfire caused by lightning, you must move out quickly.

- If you live in the Coast or have the Moveable Homes or Salt preservation resource card, give yourself 1 point.
- If you live in the Mountains or Forest subtract 1 point.
- Everyone else, do nothing.

# Ancient Mesopotamia: Geography, Farming, and the First Cities

In Unit 1, you learned how early humans survived by adapting to their environments. People depended on geography for food, water, shelter, and safety. Over time, humans learned how to farm, build permanent homes, and live in larger groups. These changes helped lead to the rise of the world's first civilizations. One of the earliest of these civilizations developed in a region called **Mesopotamia**.

Mesopotamia is often called the “cradle of civilization” because it was one of the first places where people **built cities, created laws, and developed writing**. The name Mesopotamia means “land between two rivers.” This name gives an important clue about why civilization developed there. Just like you learned in Unit 1, geography wasn't random—it played a huge role in how people lived and survived.

Mesopotamia was located between the **Tigris River** and the **Euphrates River**. These rivers provided fresh water for drinking, farming, and transportation. The land around them was part of the **Fertile Crescent**, a curved region with rich soil. This fertile land made it possible for people to grow crops in an area that was otherwise dry and difficult to live in.

However, living near rivers also came with challenges. The Tigris and Euphrates **flooded** often and **unpredictably**. Sometimes floods helped by leaving behind fertile soil, but other times they destroyed crops and homes. People living in Mesopotamia had to learn how to manage these floods in order to survive. This shows how geography could be both helpful and dangerous at the same time.

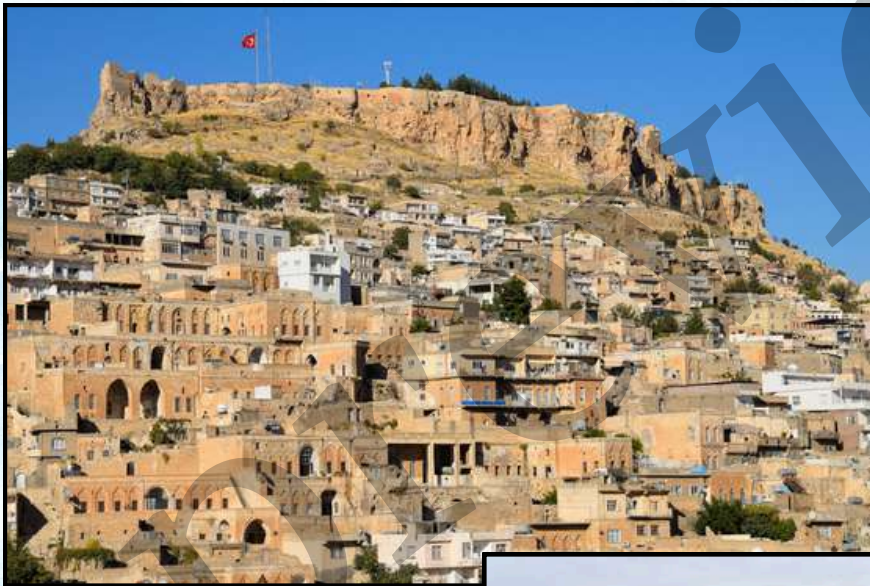
To solve these problems, Mesopotamians developed **irrigation** systems. Irrigation is a way of moving water from rivers to fields using canals and ditches. Irrigation was necessary because rainfall was limited and unreliable. By controlling the flow of water, farmers could grow crops more consistently and feed more people.



<https://nsms6thgradesocialstudies.weebly.com/mesopotamia.html>

As farming improved, people began producing more food than they needed. This extra food is called a food surplus. Because of surplus, not everyone had to be a farmer. Some people became builders, traders, craftsmen, or leaders. This led to specialization, where people focused on different jobs. Permanent settlements grew into cities, and populations increased as food became more reliable.

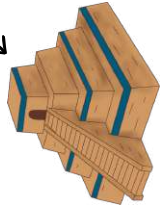
The geography of Mesopotamia shaped almost every part of daily life. Rivers provided water and fertile land, but they also required cooperation and planning. Farming and irrigation allowed small settlements to grow into cities and helped lay the foundation for government, trade, and culture. As you continue studying Ancient Mesopotamia, you will see how geography and human choices worked together to create one of the world's first civilizations.



Mardin was an Assyrian city and one of the oldest cities in Mesopotamia. It was located on a natural hillside overlooking the fertile plains and Tigris river (ideal for defense and trade). It shows us how geography influenced where people settled, traveled, and traded in ancient Mesopotamia.



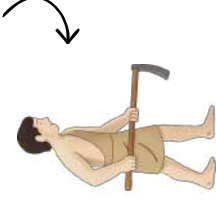
Ziggurats were  
religious temples  
built for gods



Ancient

# Mesopotamia

Mesopotamian  
farmer



## Sumerians

Where they lived:

Time Period:

Known for:

## Akkadians

Where they lived:

Time Period:

Known for:

## Babylonians

Where they lived:

Time Period:

Known for:

## Assyrians

Where they lived:

Time Period:

Known for:

## Persians

Where they lived:

Time Period:

Known for:



An Assyrian god

# Unit Three

## Ancient Egypt & Kush: 3100- 30 BC

### Books:

#### Picture books

1. [Mummies Made in Egypt by Alik](#) 🎧
2. [Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphics by James Rumford](#) 🎧
3. [Tutankhamen's Gift by Robert Sabuda](#) 🎧
4. [Temple Cat by Andrew Clements](#) 🎧
5. [The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo](#) 🎧

#### Full-Length Chapter books

1. [Mara, Daughter of the Nile by Eloise Jarvis McGraw](#) 🎧
2. [The Golden Goblet by Eloise Jarvis McGraw](#) 🎧
3. [God King by Joanne Williamson](#) 🎧

### Movies:

1. The Prince of Egypt (1998, Rated G)
  - a. Also great for Unit 5
2. Night at the Museum: Secrets of the Tomb (2014, Rated PG)
3. The Mummy (1999, Rated PG-13) \*Parent Preview Recommended

### Videos:

1. [Ancient Egypt 101: National Geographic](#)
2. [Introduction to Ancient Nubia and the Kingdom of Kush](#)
3. [Gods of Egypt for Beginners](#)
4. [Ramses the Great: National Geographic](#)



1



2



3



4

\*Teacher tip- there is a show with multiple seasons by National Geographic (available on Disney+) called Lost Treasures of Egypt that is great but rated TV-14 (mostly for gore). There are also clips of the show available on YouTube.

# Unit Three

## Ancient Egypt & Kush: 3100- 30 BC

### Activities:

1. **Ancient Egypt Mapping Activity**- After reading “The Nile River’s Predictable Flooding”, students use the reliable resources from the internet or books to label the map.
2. **Pharaohs**- Students read about the Pharaohs and then choose one Pharaoh to research and complete an “About Me” page.
3. **Afterlife and the Pyramids**- Students read “The Afterlife and the Pyramids” and then color, cut, and assemble their own pyramid, including the common relics that were found within them.
4. **Canopic Jars Craft**- After reading about canopic jars, students use toilet paper rolls (or rolled construction paper) to create their own canopic jars craft.  
*\*Supplies needed*
5. **Egyptian Calendar**- Learn how and why Egyptians created the first calendar, and then follow the steps to create your own.
6. **DIY Papyrus**- Students use a brown paper bag and glue to make their own papyrus paper like the Egyptians. *\*Supplies needed*
7. **The Kingdom of Kush Coloring Page**

### Standards Covered:

- 6.2.3- Relationship between Mesopotamia and Egypt
- 6.2.5- Egyptian art and architecture
- 6.2.6- Trade in Egypt with the Nile River
- 6.2.7- Queen Hatshepsut and Ramses the Great
- 6.2.8- The Kush civilization
- 6.2.9- Evolution of language and its written form

# The Pharaohs

As civilizations grew along the Nile River, Egypt developed a strong central government led by a ruler called a **pharaoh**. Unlike Mesopotamia, which was originally made up of many independent city-states, Egypt was mostly **unified under one ruler**. This unity helped create stability and order across the civilization. The pharaoh was responsible for making laws, leading the army, collecting taxes, and overseeing large building projects such as temples and pyramids.

Pharaohs were not only political leaders—they were also considered **religious leaders**. Egyptians believed the pharaoh was chosen by the gods and was partly divine, a belief known as **divine kingship**. Because the pharaoh was thought to represent the gods on Earth, obedience to the pharaoh was both a government duty and a religious responsibility. This close connection between religion and government helped unite the people and strengthen the pharaoh's authority.

Egyptian society was organized into a social hierarchy, or ranked system. At the top was the pharaoh, followed by priests and government officials who helped manage the kingdom. Below them were scribes, who were highly respected because they could read and write. Artisans and merchants came next, creating goods and trading along the Nile. At the bottom of the hierarchy were farmers, who made up most of the population and worked the land to provide food for the entire civilization.

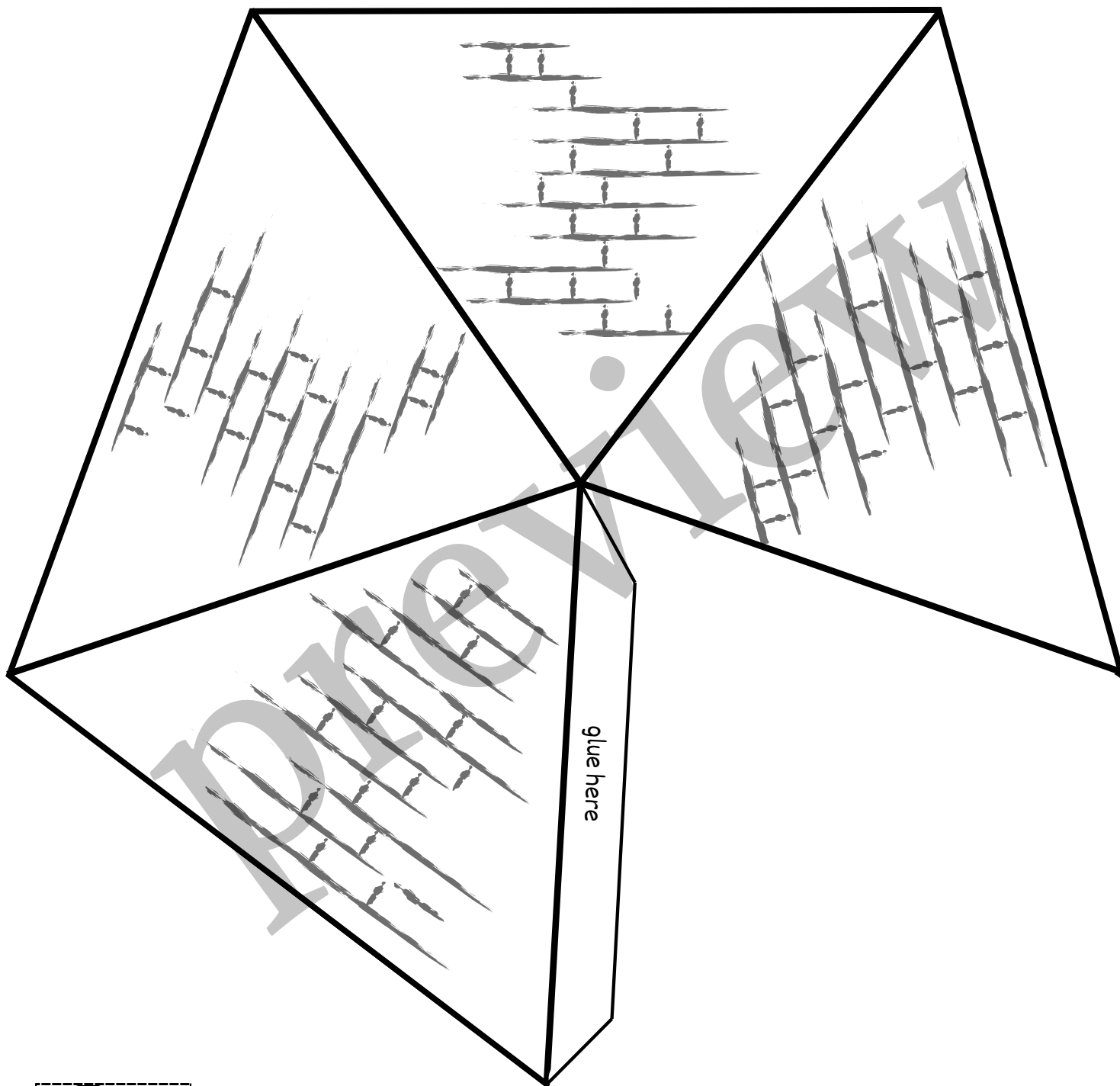
To govern such a large and powerful kingdom, Egypt developed a **bureaucracy**, or a system of officials who carried out the pharaoh's decisions. These officials collected taxes, managed food supplies, kept records, and supervised building projects. Scribes played a key role by recording laws, supplies, and important events. This organized system allowed Egypt to remain unified and stable for long periods of time.

Several well-known pharaohs helped shape Egypt's history in different ways. **Khufu** is remembered for ordering the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza, one of the largest structures in the ancient world. **Hatshepsut**, one of Egypt's few female pharaohs, is known for a peaceful reign focused on trade and building projects. **Ramses II**, often called Ramses the Great, ruled for many years and became famous for his military campaigns and monuments. **Tutankhamun**, though not powerful during his lifetime, is well known today because his nearly untouched tomb gave historians valuable insight into ancient Egyptian life and beliefs.



\*Please note- Cleopatra is not included because she ruled much later, near the end of ancient Egypt's history during the Roman period, while this section focuses on pharaohs from Egypt's earlier kingdoms.

**Instructions:** Color and cut out the pyramid. Use glue to assemble into a 3D shape. Attach your pyramid on one side with tape to the following page, making sure you can still tilt it open. Then, read about each item that would be commonly found in a pharaoh's tomb and follow the instructions on where to place them.



**Mummy & Sarcophagus-** The pharaoh's body was mummified, which was a 70-day process that involved removing the organs (except for the heart), drying it with salt, and adding oils. It was then wrapped in linen and placed in a sarcophagus. The goal was to preserve the body as a vessel so the soul could reach the afterlife. Place inside the pyramid.

# Canopic Jars

**Canopic jars** were an important part of ancient Egyptian burial practices. As you've learned, Egyptians believed strongly in the afterlife, and they thought a person would need their body to be whole in order to live again after death. Because of this belief, they carefully preserved bodies through mummification and protected important organs using canopic jars.

During mummification, embalmers removed certain organs from the body because they would decay quickly. These organs—the **liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines**—were placed into separate canopic jars. The heart was usually left inside the body because Egyptians believed it was the center of intelligence and emotion and would be needed in the afterlife.

Each canopic jar was protected by one of the **Four Sons of Horus**, who were gods believed to guard the organs. The jar lids were often shaped like heads to represent these gods. One had a **human head**, another a **baboon**, another a **jackal**, and another a **falcon**. This showed how closely religion and burial practices were connected in ancient Egypt.

Canopic jars were usually placed inside the tomb near the mummy so the organs would stay close to the body. Wealthy Egyptians often had beautifully decorated jars made of stone or pottery, while poorer families used simpler containers. These jars help historians understand how much Egyptians valued preparation for the afterlife and how religion shaped even the smallest details of daily and spiritual life.



Horus- the god of the pharaohs and typically depicted with a falcon head



The Eye of Horus- a symbol of protection, healing, and restoration.

**Hapy**



baboon head  
lungs

**Imsety**



human head  
liver

**Duamutef**



jackel head  
stomach

**Qebehsenuf**



falcon head  
intestines

# Canopic Jars Craft

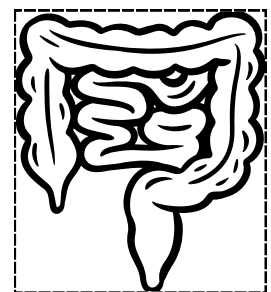
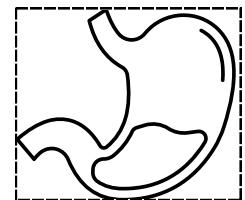
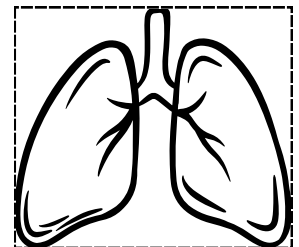
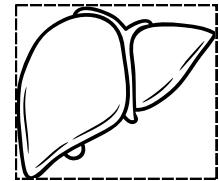
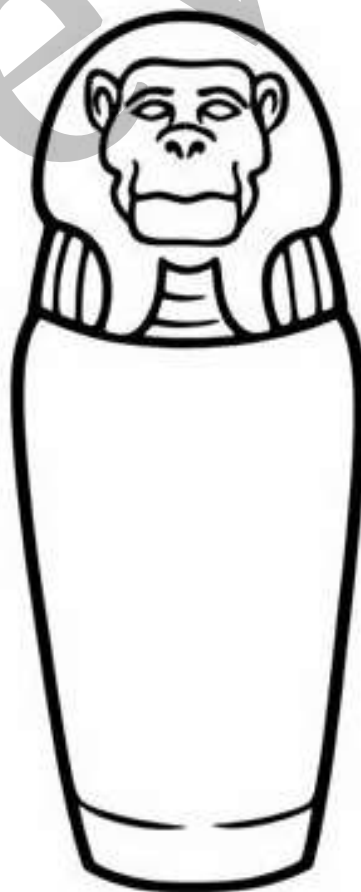
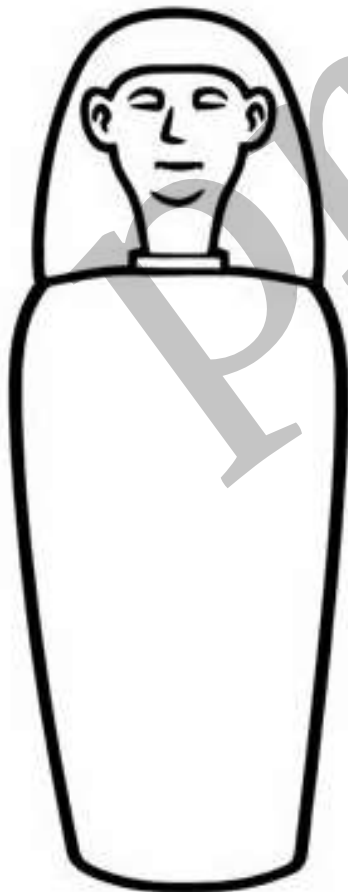
Using what you just learned about canopic jars, gather the supplies below and create your own canopic jars out of toilet paper rolls!

## Supplies:

4 toilet paper rolls (or construction paper rolled into a tube)  
glue and tape  
markers, crayons, or colored pencils

## Steps:

1. Color the 4 Sons of Horus below. Write their name and the organ that was placed in each of their jars on the front. Cut them out and glue them to the toilet paper rolls.
2. Cut out the circles and tape one circle to the bottom of the toilet paper roll in order to keep the organs from falling out.
3. Color and cut out the organs. Place the organs in the correct canopic jar.
4. Share what you learned with a friend.



# Geography of the Indian Subcontinent

Just like the civilizations you've already studied, **ancient India** was deeply shaped by geography. The Indian subcontinent is a large land area in **South Asia** that includes present-day **India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives**. Its size, rivers, mountains, and climate all played an important role in where people settled and how civilizations developed.

One of the most important geographic features of ancient India was the **Indus River**. Early civilizations grew along this river because it provided fresh water for drinking, farming, and trade. The Indus River flooded at certain times of the year, leaving behind fertile soil that helped crops grow. Because of this, people were able to settle in one place instead of moving constantly in search of food.

The Indian subcontinent was also shaped by powerful natural barriers. To the north stood the **Himalayan Mountains**, the tallest mountain range in the world. These mountains helped protect the region from invasion and limited contact with other civilizations for long periods of time. While the mountains made travel difficult, they also helped shape a unique culture by separating the subcontinent from much of the rest of Asia.

Climate played a major role in daily life as well. Each year, **monsoon** winds brought heavy rains to the region. These seasonal rains were important for farming, but they could also cause flooding if they were too strong or arrived at the wrong time. Farmers depended on the monsoons to water their crops, so understanding weather patterns was essential for survival.

Geography also affected trade and movement. While mountains blocked travel in some directions, rivers and coastal areas made trade possible with nearby regions. Goods, ideas, and technologies slowly moved in and out of the subcontinent, helping ancient Indian civilizations connect with the wider world.

By studying the geography of the Indian subcontinent, we can better understand why civilizations developed there and how people adapted to their environment. Rivers supported farming, mountains offered protection, and climate shaped daily life. These geographic features laid the foundation for the civilizations you'll learn about next in ancient India.



# Indus Valley Artifacts

**Instructions:** Today you get to pretend to be an Archaeologist! You will study these artifacts found in the Indus Valley and make hypothesis about what you think they are and what they were used for. Remember, because historians are still unable to decipher the Indus script, what we know about these artifacts is limited.



## Artifact 1

What I notice:

What I think it is:

What I think it might be used for:

## Artifact 2



What I notice:

What I think it is:

What I think it might be used for:



## Artifact 3

What I notice:

What I think it is:

What I think it might be used for:

## Artifact 4



What I notice:

What I think it is:

What I think it might be used for:

# Geography & the Migration of Hebrews

The history of the **Hebrews** is closely tied to geography and movement. Unlike civilizations such as Egypt or the Indus Valley, which developed around one major river and stayed mostly in one place, the Hebrews moved through several regions over time. Their story begins in Mesopotamia, where living near rivers and trade routes exposed the Hebrews to many different cultures, languages, and ideas that shaped their early history.

From Mesopotamia, the Hebrews migrated to **Canaan**, a land located along the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Canaan's geography included hills, valleys, and farmland, but it did not have a large river like the Nile. This meant farming was more challenging and depended heavily on rainfall. Because Canaan sat between major civilizations, it was often traveled through or fought over, which affected Hebrew life and required communities to adapt and move when needed.

During a time of famine, many Hebrews traveled south to **Egypt**, where the Nile River provided reliable food and water. Egypt's geography made it one of the most powerful civilizations in the ancient world. While life in Egypt offered stability at first, the Hebrews eventually became enslaved. This experience deeply shaped their identity and stories, leading to the event known as the **Exodus**, when the Hebrews left Egypt to escape slavery.

The journey out of Egypt and back toward Canaan required traveling through deserts and difficult terrain. This long migration strengthened the Hebrew sense of community and reliance on shared traditions, laws, and stories. Because they could not depend on large cities or monuments to preserve their culture, they relied instead on oral tradition, teaching history and beliefs through storytelling and shared memory.

After returning to Canaan, the Hebrews continued to face challenges from geography and neighboring peoples. The land was divided into regions, and communities were often spread out rather than united in one city. Over time, these experiences helped shape a strong identity based on **shared history, movement, and belief**, rather than on empire or territory.

The migrations of the Hebrews show how geography can influence a civilization's development in powerful ways. Moving through different landscapes—fertile river valleys, dry deserts, and contested lands—shaped Hebrew culture, traditions, and identity. Their history demonstrates that **movement and shared experiences can be just as important as location** in shaping a civilization.



# Judaism vs. Polytheism Comparison Chart

**Instructions:** After reading “Judaism & Monotheism” complete the cut-and-paste comparison chart. You will cut out the pieces on the following page and glue them into the appropriate spot on the chart below.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Polytheistic Religions</b>
Number of gods		
Power of gods		
Moral rules		
Source of law		
View of rulers		
Purpose of religion		
Everyday life		

# Judaism vs. Polytheism Comparison Chart

Belief in one God (monotheism)	Laws believed to come from God, not rulers
Religion guided daily choices and treatment of others	Laws usually created by kings or governments
One God rules over all people and places	Belief in many gods (polytheism)
Rules and expectations often changed by city or god	One set of moral laws applies to everyone
Even leaders must obey moral law	Focus on rituals to please specific gods
Each god has limited power (storms, war, rivers, fertility, etc.)	Religion focused more on ceremonies and offerings
Focus on ethical behavior, justice, and responsibility	Kings sometimes seen as chosen by or connected to gods

# TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ANCIENT HEBREW HISTORY

2,000  
BC

## Abraham and the Beginnings of Judaism

According to tradition, Abraham lived in Mesopotamia and made a covenant, or special agreement, with God. This event is seen as the beginning of Judaism and the start of Hebrew history as a distinct people.

1,800-  
1,600 BC

## Migration to Canaan

Abraham's descendants migrated to Canaan, a land along the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It was known as "The Promised Land". This region became central to Hebrew identity and later history.

1,600-  
1,300 BC

## Hebrews in Egypt

During a famine, many Hebrews moved to Egypt and settled near the Nile River Delta. Over time, they lost their freedom and were eventually enslaved.

1,300 BC

## The Exodus

Led by Moses, the Hebrews left Egypt in an event known as the Exodus. This journey marked a major turning point in Hebrew history.

1,300-  
1,200 BC

## Wandering in the Wilderness

After leaving Egypt, the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. During this time, they developed shared laws, traditions, and a stronger group identity.

1,000 BC

## Kingdom of Israel Under King David

David united the Hebrew tribes into one kingdom and made Jerusalem the capital. This period strengthened political unity and cultural identity.

## TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN ANCIENT HEBREW HISTORY CONTINUED

586 BC

### **Babylonian Exile**

The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the First Temple. Many Hebrews were taken into exile in Babylon, forcing Jewish communities to practice their religion without a homeland or temple.

516 BC

### **Return from Exile and Second Temple**

Some Hebrews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the Temple, known as the Second Temple. Jewish religious life continued to center on law, worship, and community.

70 AD

### **Destruction of the Second Temple**

The Roman Empire destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple. After this event, Jews were dispersed throughout many regions.

After 70 AD

### **Preservation of Judaism**

Leaders like Yohanan ben Zaccai emphasized study, law, and community instead of temple worship. This helped Judaism survive and continue into the modern world.



# Loess Soil STEM Activity

**Focus:** Yellow River flooding + loess soil

**Time:** 10–15 minutes

**Prep:** Very low

## Materials:

2 shallow trays or baking dishes

Regular soil or dirt

Fine sand or flour (to represent loess)

Small cup of water



The Huang He (Yellow River) where they would grow millet and wheat

## Setup:

1. Have student(s) feel the flour and the soil between their fingers.
  - a. Question: How would you describe the texture of the “loess soil (flour)”? How would you describe the regular soil?
2. Then, have student(s) fill one tray with regular soil and a second tray with fine sand or flour (loess soil).
3. Push the soil to the sides and make a “river” through the middle.
4. Student(s) slowly pour the same amount of water onto each tray where the river goes.
5. Observe what happens.

## What you should see:

- The loess (fine soil) erodes much faster
- Water turns cloudy quickly
- Soil moves easily during “flooding”

## Discussion Questions

- Which soil washed away faster?
- How might flooding affect farmers?
- Why would people still choose to live near the river?



**Key Learning:** Loess soil was great for farming but made flooding more dangerous.



# Dynasties and the Mandate of Heaven

Ancient China was governed by a series of dynasties that ruled for thousands of years. A **dynasty** is a line of rulers from the same family who pass power from one generation to the next. Although different dynasties came and went, many ideas about leadership, order, and responsibility remained constant throughout Chinese history. One of the most important of these ideas was the **Mandate of Heaven**, which shaped how people understood government and political change.

The Chinese believed that rulers did not gain power simply because of strength or wealth. Instead, they believed that **heaven granted the right to rule** to a just and capable leader. This belief was known as the Mandate of Heaven. According to this idea, a ruler was expected to govern wisely, maintain peace, and care for the people. When a ruler succeeded, the country experienced stability and prosperity. When a ruler became corrupt, cruel, or ineffective, disasters such as floods, famine, or rebellion were seen as signs that heaven had withdrawn its support. At that point, it was believed that a new ruler or dynasty had the right to take control.

## **The Shang Dynasty:**

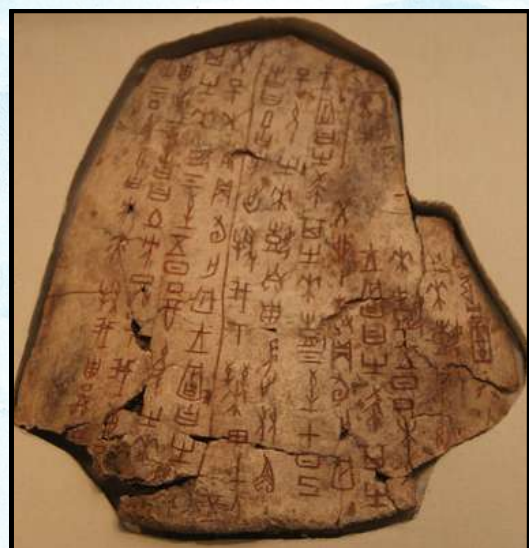
The Shang Dynasty was one of the earliest known dynasties in China. It ruled from about 1600–1046 BCE. The Shang kings controlled large areas of land and led armies into battle.

Key features of the Shang Dynasty:

- Kings ruled with the help of nobles and warriors
- Writing developed, including characters carved on oracle bones
- Society was divided into classes, with peasants and enslaved people doing most of the labor

The Shang Dynasty eventually fell when another group claimed that the Shang rulers had lost the Mandate of Heaven.

An **oracle bone** was an ox shoulder blade or tortoise shell that the Shang dynasty used for divination. Heat was applied to create cracks in the bone, which were interpreted as answers from ancestors about daily life, war, hunting, and weather.



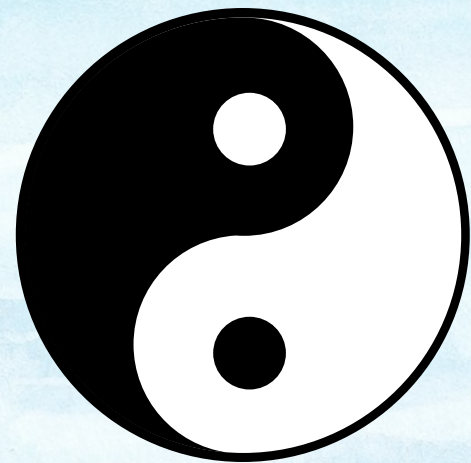
# Belief Systems & Social Order in China

Ancient Chinese civilization was shaped not only by geography and government, but also by powerful belief systems that explained how people should live, behave, and govern. During times of peace and conflict, Chinese thinkers developed philosophies that focused on order, harmony, and responsibility. Three of the most important belief systems in ancient China were **Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism**. These ideas strongly influenced family life, social structure, and government.

**Confucianism** was based on the teachings of a Chinese philosopher known as Confucius or Kong Fuzi, who lived during a time of political disorder. Confucius believed that a stable society depended on strong relationships and moral behavior. He taught that people should show respect for elders, obey authority, and act with kindness and honesty. According to Confucian ideas, **rulers were expected to be good role models who governed fairly and cared for their people**. Confucianism emphasized education, loyalty, and duty, and it became the foundation of Chinese family life and government for centuries.

Another important philosophy was **Daoism** (also called Taoism). Daoism focused on **living in harmony with nature** and following the natural order of the universe, known as the Dao, or “the Way.” Daoist thinkers believed that people should live simply, avoid conflict, and allow life to flow naturally rather than forcing control. Unlike Confucianism, which stressed rules and responsibilities, Daoism encouraged balance, peace, and reflection. These ideas influenced Chinese art, medicine, and attitudes toward nature.

A third belief system, **Legalism**, took a very different approach. Legalist thinkers believed that **people were naturally selfish and needed strict laws to maintain order**. Under Legalism, strong rulers enforced clear rules and harsh punishments to control society. Legalism was used most strongly during the Qin Dynasty, when the government valued obedience and efficiency over individual freedom. While Legalism helped unify China and strengthen the government, it often caused fear and resentment among the people.



The Yin and Yang symbol originated from Daoism and represents opposing yet complementary forces, such as light and dark or male and female.



# Belief Systems & Social Order in China

These belief systems also shaped social structure in ancient China. Society was organized in a hierarchy, with the emperor at the top, followed by government officials, farmers, artisans, and merchants. Family relationships were especially important, and children were expected to **respect and obey their parents**. This idea, known as **filial piety**, was a key part of Confucian teaching. Each person had a role to play, and social harmony depended on everyone fulfilling their responsibilities.

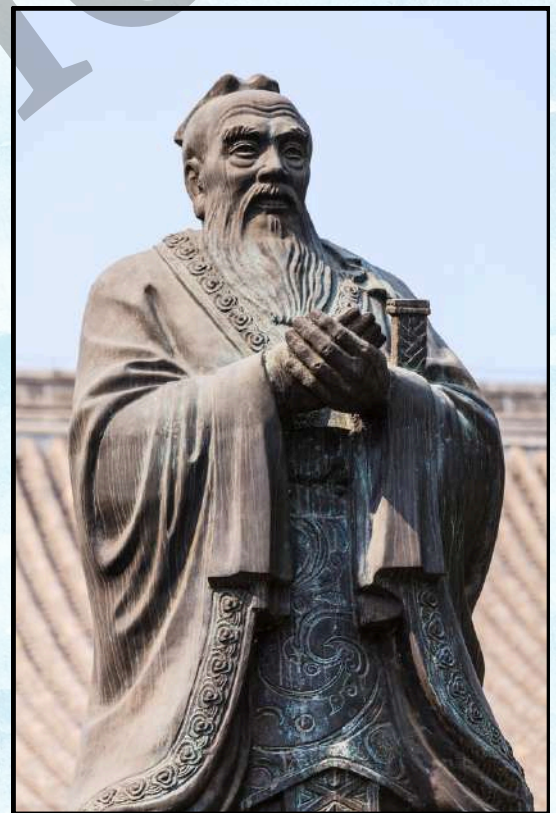
Together, Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism helped guide how ancient Chinese society functioned. While each philosophy offered a different view of human nature and government, all three influenced Chinese civilization for thousands of years. These belief systems helped create order, explain leadership, and shape daily life, leaving a lasting impact on China's history and culture.



Minglun Hall (lecture hall) of a Confucian temple in Guangxi, China



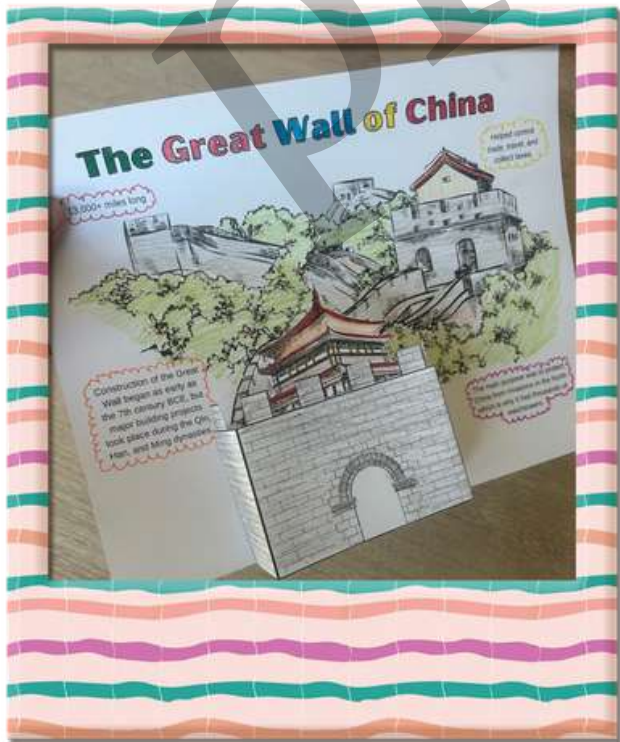
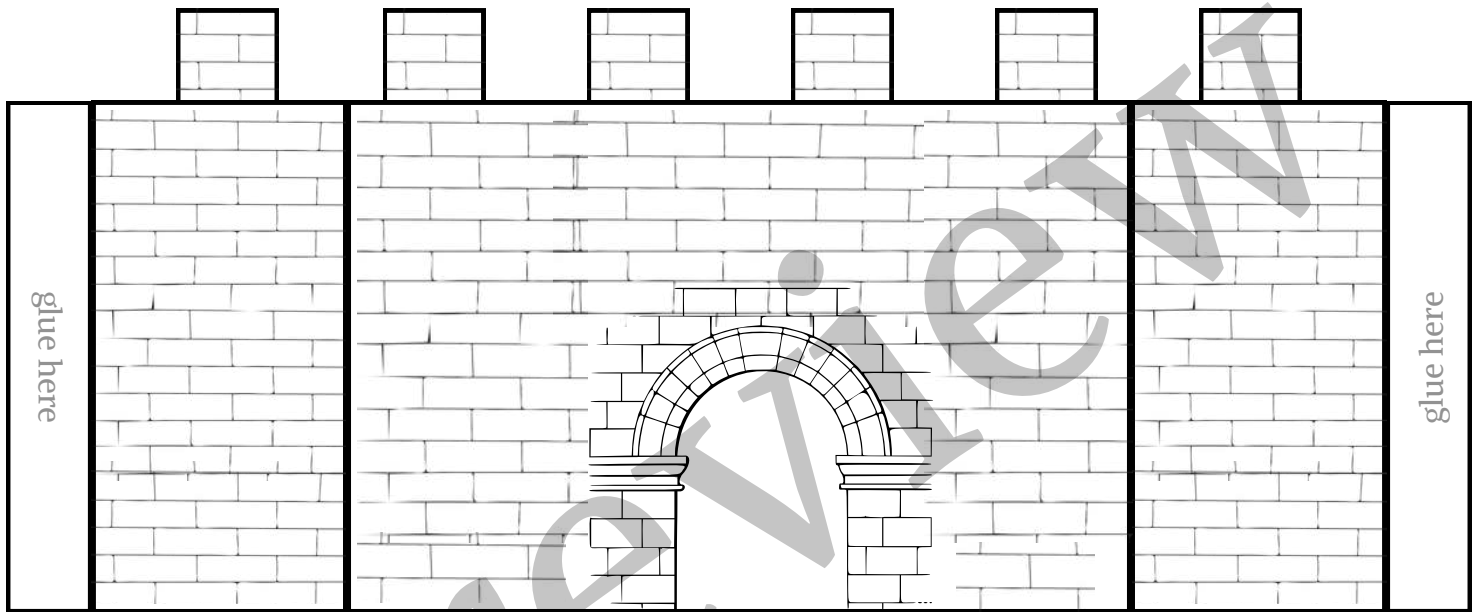
Dragons on temple roofs were thought to ward off evil spirits, protect against fires, and represent imperial power.



A bronze statue of Confucius (Kong Fuzi or Master Kong), who lived from 551–479 BC

# Great Wall 3D Coloring Page

**Instructions:** Color the watchtower pieces below and then cut them out. Color the next page- this will be your background. Assemble the 3D watchtower by gluing and attaching it to your background like the example shows.



# Democracy- Examining a Primary Source

During the Golden Age of Athens, a leader named **Pericles** gave a famous speech honoring soldiers who had died defending their city. This speech is known as **Pericles' Funeral Oration**. In it, Pericles explained why democracy was important to Athens and what made their government different from others. His words help historians understand how Athenians viewed citizenship, equality, and responsibility.

"Our form of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbors. Instead, we are an example to others. It is called a democracy because power is in the hands of the many, not the few. All citizens are equal under the law, and people are chosen for public office based on ability, not wealth."

\*adapted for student use



**Instructions:** Examine the excerpt from Pericles' Funeral Oration above. Then, underline or circle the following:

- One phrase about who holds power
- One phrase about equality
- One phrase about leadership or responsibility

Next, rewrite Pericles' ideas in your own words below.

---

---

---

---

1. According to Pericles, what makes someone a good citizen?

---

2. What rights did citizens have in a democracy like Athens?

---

3. How were laws made?

---

4. In Athens, who could be a citizen and vote?

---

# Ancient Greek Vases & Daily Life

**Background:** Ancient Greek vases were more than just containers—they were an important part of everyday life and a way for the Greeks to tell stories. Vases were used to store food and water, carry oil or wine, and even as prizes in athletic competitions. Artists painted scenes on these vases that showed daily activities such as farming, trading, exercising, and family life, as well as myths and religious ceremonies. Because many people could not read or write, these images helped share ideas and traditions. Today, historians study Greek vases to learn how ordinary people lived, what they wore, and what they valued in their daily lives.

**Instructions:** Using a die, roll and based on the number you get, add the pattern or image to the vase template on the following page. Color the vase.



## Round 1:

Add this pattern to the bottom of your vase



## Round 2:

Add this image to the middle of your vase



## Round 3:

Add this pattern to the top of your vase



# MY ANCIENT GREEK VASE



# The Roman Trade Game

## Supplies:

- 2 dice
- 1 Trade Card per player
- 1 Map per player
- Pencil

**Time:** 15–20 minutes

2–6 players is best

## Setup & Mapping Activity:

1. Read about 8 provinces that Rome conquered. Then, shade each of them a different color on the map provided.
2. Using the key below, add the number associated with the goods sold in that region to the map. For example, put a “2” next to the gold on Gaul.
3. Shade the Mediterranean Sea blue.

\*Note- While completing the map isn't necessary to play, it does offer an additional learning opportunity for students to understand Roman trade across key provinces.

## How to Play:

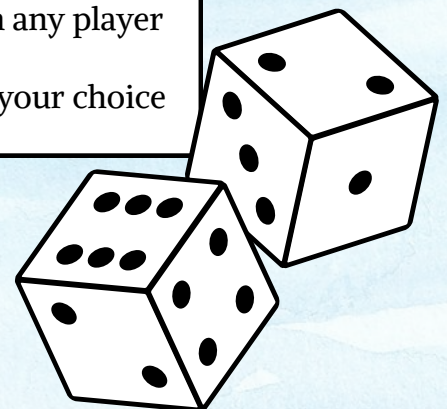
1. Once your map is complete, roll to go first. Whoever gets the highest number starts.
2. When it's your turn, roll both dice.
  - a. The number rolled = what goods you collect OR what perils/rewards you incur. Use the key below to decipher your roll.
3. Keep track of the goods you've collected on your Trade Card by placing an “x” in the box when you've collected that good. Make sure to **use a pencil** so you can erase if someone steals one of your goods.

## How to Win:

Be the first player to collect 2 of each good on your Trade Card.

Territories & Goods	
2	Gaul → Gold 
4	Hispania → Silver 
5	Britannia → Wool 
5	Italy → Olive Oil 
7	Greece → Wine 
8	Asia Minor → Spices 
10	Egypt → Grain 
11	North Africa → Pottery 

Other Roles	
3	Road damage- lose a turn
6	New road built- roll again
9	Steal a good from any player
12	Get a free good- your choice



# The End of the Roman Republic

For hundreds of years, Rome was governed as a **republic**, with elected leaders and shared power. Over time, however, this system began to weaken. As Rome expanded, it faced new challenges such as corruption, economic inequality, and political violence. Powerful generals gained loyal armies, and competition for control of the government increased. These problems made it difficult for the republic to function as it once had.

One of the most important figures during this time was **Julius Caesar**. Caesar was a successful military general who gained popularity with soldiers and ordinary citizens. As his power grew, he challenged the authority of the Senate. In 49 BCE, Caesar crossed the Rubicon River with his army, starting a **civil war**. After winning, he took control of Rome and was named **dictator for life**. While some Romans supported Caesar because he brought stability and reforms, others feared he wanted to become a king.

In 44 BCE, a group of senators assassinated Julius Caesar (called the “**Ides of March**”), believing they were protecting the republic. Instead, his death led to more chaos. Rome soon fell into another civil war as different leaders competed for power. During this period, the republic continued to weaken, and violence became a common part of politics.

Out of this instability emerged **Augustus**, Caesar’s adopted heir. After defeating his rivals, Augustus took control of Rome in 27 BCE. Rather than calling himself king, he claimed to be the “first citizen” and kept many republican forms, such as the Senate. In reality, Augustus held most of the power, marking the beginning of the **Roman Empire**.

Under Augustus, Rome entered a long period of peace and stability known as the **Pax Romana**, or “Roman Peace.” Roads were improved, trade expanded, and the empire became more organized. Although Rome still used the language of a republic, real authority now rested with one emperor. This transition from republic to empire changed Rome forever and shaped its future for centuries.



Statue of Julius Caesar



Statue of Augustus

# Roman Soldier Mosaic

## Supplies:

construction paper (multiple colors)

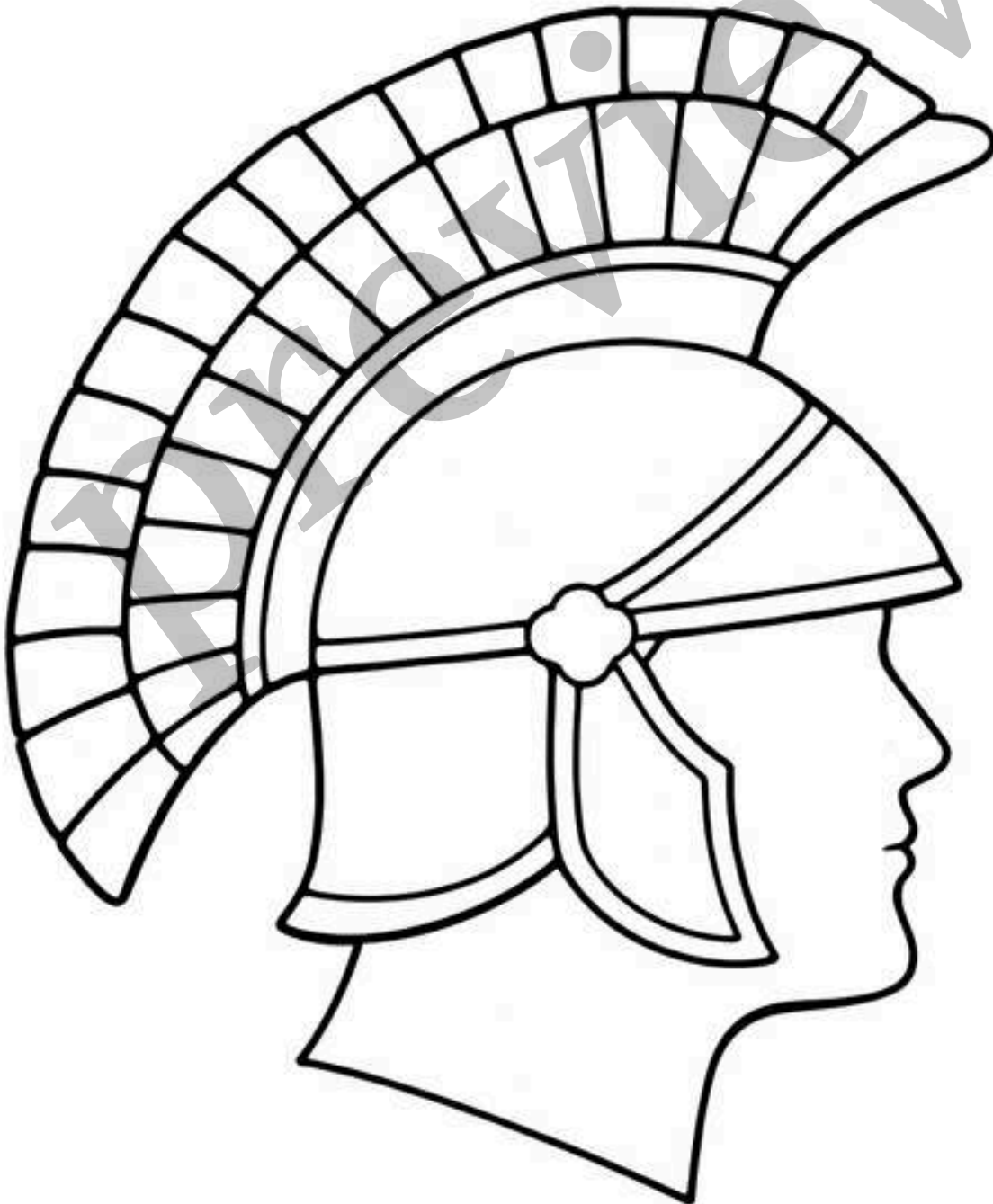
glue

scissors



## Instructions:

1. Decide which color you want to use in each section and then cut out small squares approximately 1/2" in size.
  2. Using the template below, glue the square pieces of paper on each section to create a Roman soldier mosaic.
- 



# Unit 1

## Early Humans

In this unit, we are traveling all the way back to the very beginning of human history—long before cities, writing, or even farming existed. You'll learn how the first humans lived as hunter-gatherers, how they used tools and fire to survive, and how they slowly began to form communities. We'll explore cave art, early inventions, and the big changes that happened during the Neolithic Revolution when people first started farming and settling down. Get ready to imagine life thousands of years ago and discover how these early humans laid the foundation for every civilization that came after them!



# Unit 2

## Ancient Mesopotamia

In unit 2, you'll explore one of the world's very first civilizations, located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. You'll discover why Mesopotamia is called the "Cradle of Civilization" and learn how farming, irrigation, and city-building changed the world. We'll study powerful leaders like Hammurabi, examine the first written language—cuneiform—and uncover inventions such as the wheel and early laws that still influence us today. Get ready to step into bustling city-states, towering ziggurats, and the beginning of recorded history!

